

Getaway becomes a Giveaway (Spring/Summer)

At this time of year, thousands of Britons are looking forward to jetting off for a well-deserved holiday. However, coming home to find that your house has been burgled could quickly turn your dream holiday into a nightmare.

To help holidaymakers we have devised a simple checklist, which gives practical steps on how to keep your home safe while you are away.

In all the excitement of planning your trip, it is easy to forget that opportunistic burglars might be waiting to take advantage while you are away. Indeed, nearly half of all burglaries take place when houses are empty for a while.

However, by following the simple steps you can help to significantly reduce the chances of being targeted by a burglar while you are away.

One week before you go:

- Cancel any milk or newspaper deliveries for the duration of your holiday
- Consider leaving valuables with other family members or locking them up in a safe
- Cut the lawn before you go and trim any plants that burglars could hide behind
- Uncollected mail is a sure sign that no one is at home. Use the Royal Mail's Keep Safe service which will keep your mail for up to two months or ask a neighbour to stop and pick up your mail for you
- Put all your tools away so they cannot be used to break into your house and lock your garage and shed with proper security locks
- Make sure you have up-to-date contents and building insurance

The day of departure

- Try to leave your home looking like someone is living in it. Do not close your curtains as in the daytime this shows the house is empty. Use automatic timer-switches to turn your lights on when it goes dark. Alternatively, ask a neighbour to pop in and open and close curtains and so on
- Try not to leave valuable items, like your TV, stereo and DVD where burglars can see them
- Do not write your home address on your luggage labels until you are on your return journey
- Just before you set off, make sure you spend a few minutes double checking that you done all you have to do and ensure your locks are safely secured, if you have a burglar alarm it is set

Finally:

Do not forget your tickets and passport and have a good trip!