

How to Prepare Your Home For Vacation

Inside Your House

- Put a few indoor lights on an automatic timer throughout your house and set them for various time intervals.
- Park your cars in the garage.
- Leave the car keys with a friend or tell the friend where to find them in your house in case of an emergency.
- Leave a spare key with a trusted friend and neighbor (and the alarm code if necessary).
- Pay all bills that will be due while you are away.
- Empty all trash cans and run the dishwasher the night before you leave.
- Empty the washer and dryer of all clothes.
- Clear out the refrigerator and throw out any food that will spoil while you are away.
- Place a box of baking soda inside the fridge to absorb any odors.
- Turn off the thermostat or turn it down to a temperature that is comfortable.
- Turn off the water to avoid flooding from frozen pipes bursting or leaks in general.
- Unplug any electronics that don't need to run while you are away.
- Check smoke detectors and make sure they are in working condition.
- Put valuables in a fire proof safe.
- Do a walk through and make sure all doors and windows are locked.
- Set your home burglary alarm when you leave.

Outside

- Have outdoor lights that run on an automatic timer or have motion sensors if possible.
- If you have a newspaper delivered, be sure to ask for a vacation hold.
- Stop all mail by filling out a "Hold Mail Form" on USPS.gov or have someone pick up the mail while you are away.
- If you plan to be away for an extended period of time, arrange for someone to mow your yard so it looks like someone is at home. If you are traveling during the winter, arrange for someone to shovel your walkways and/or plow your driveway.
- Set your sprinklers to water the grass and plants or arrange for someone to come by and take care of this.
- If you have a swimming pool, make sure to have someone that will check on the pool periodically and make sure the pump is working.

Pets

- Contact the kennel/pet sitter in advance to make sure they have availability.
- Pack your pet's favorite bedding, toys, and food to last for the duration of their time at the kennel/pet sitter.
- Find a time to take your pet to their "vacation destination" when you have time to devote to their drop off.
- Make sure to leave the contact information of a local friend (and vet) with the pet sitter in case of an emergency.

Notify

- Call your credit card company and let them know your travel plans.
- Notify your local police department and let them know you will be traveling.
- Notify your alarm company so they know not to treat alarms as "false alarms".
- Give a family member and/or friend a copy of your itinerary and contact numbers in case of emergency. If they live nearby, ask them to check on the house while you are away.
- If you have a service that comes to your house regularly (cleaning crew, dry cleaner, etc.), give them notice that they do not need to come while you are away.

