

Home safety tips for snowbirds

When you're going away on your annual vacation you want to rest — and rest easy too. You want peace of mind that your home is as safe as it can be from burglary or other damage.

According to Patrice De Luca, V.P. of Marketing and Business Development for Protectron Security Systems, there are several key steps snowbirds should take to ensure peace of mind when away from home. The following Protectron home safety guidelines can help you plan important safety measures before your departure:

- Suspend your newspaper and mail delivery; or have a neighbor collect them for you

- Make sure the house looks lived in

That means having someone shovel the walk, clear your car off if it snows, or park their car in your driveway if you're taking yours. You can even ask a neighbor to put a bag of garbage at your curb on garbage day.

- Set your lights on timers, in various rooms

With some timers, the lights go on and off at different times each day, which means a burglar can't pick up on a pattern. Motion sensor lights outside can also deter a burglar. Consider installing them in front and back.

- Ensure that all your doors and windows are locked and secure

Don't forget about the garage. To be extra safe, place a bar or stick of wood in the lower track of sliding doors or windows.

- Turn off the water-main and unplug the major appliances as an added precaution

- Inform a neighbor when you're leaving and returning, and ask them to keep an eye out for anything suspicious

Leave them a phone number where you can be reached, and a spare set of your keys in case of an emergency.

- Consider a home security system

A home security system is a very effective deterrent. When looking for their targets, thieves usually select an unoccupied home with the easiest access. Why not make it difficult for them. A home protected by a security system is three times less susceptible to a break in than one without a system. Security system decals and signs are also an effective deterrent. Make sure your security system includes a loud inside alarm, detectors at all exterior doors, and motion sensors in the master bedroom and main living areas.

De Luca says the latest technology in security systems can now allow you to monitor your home from a distance by e-mail response. The alarm system is linked to a remote monitoring station that protects your home 24 hours a day against burglars, fire, carbon monoxide poisoning and floods by supervising the temperature, electrical system and point of entries of your home.

"We can even configure the system to inform you by e-mail of the duration of comings and goings in your home, (cleaning staff, neighbors, family)" De Luca added. For more information on protecting your home while you're away visit www.protectron.com.

—News Canada



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