

Are you already planning for summer vacation?

BCA encourages residents take a moment to make plans for securing your property and belongings before heading out. We've compiled a list of tips and a variety of resources for you and suggest that taking a few of these precautionary measures before leaving can help to protect your home while you're away.

Be sure to lock all windows and doors and use your security system if you have one. Park your vehicle inside of your garage and even turn off the automatic garage door opener to deter unauthorized access too.

Consider hiring a house sitter or ask a trusted neighbor to keep an eye on your home. Request that they pick up mail, flyers, and any deliveries. Remember that most burglaries happen between 6am and 6pm so it's a good idea to have someone stop by during the day as well.

To maintain the appearance that the home is occupied, invest in a few timers and set lights to go on and off throughout the evening and nighttime hours. Check outside lighting too. Spend a few minutes unplugging the televisions, irons, coffee makers and other appliances to protect them from power surges and perhaps save a little in power costs.

Social media is a great way to share your plans with your friends but refrain from broadcasting your trip too widely. You can share the details when you're back safe and sound.

For more ideas on how to secure your home and plan a safe trip, see the latest Neighborhood Watch newsletter offered by the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office at <http://sheriff.loudoun.gov/index.aspx?nid=135>

The LCSO also offers several services to help residents with general safety and security. One of these services is a Crime Prevention Security Survey. This is a physical inspection conducted by a deputy sheriff to evaluate property from a crime prevention and security perspective. The deputy will make recommendation on how you can reduce your chances of becoming a victim. This is a free service. To schedule a security survey of your home or business please contact Major John Fraga, john.fraga@loudoun.gov.