

Vacation Tips

If you are heading out on vacation make sure to follow these steps so thieves won't know you are away.:

- Place your mail on hold or have someone you trust pick it up for you.
- Wait to change your social media sites (Facebook, Twitter) until you are back home. This way you will not publicize you are gone.
- Do not change your voicemail or home machine to announce that you are gone.
- Make it look like you are still home:
 - * Put lights and other electronics on a timer.
 - * Have someone change your vehicles around or a neighbor park theirs there while you are gone.

Alarms

Alarms are becoming more popular but do your research before getting your system. Here are some suggestions:

- Look at several companies and types of alarms they offer before purchasing an alarm system. Which one best suites your needs?
- Verify your system is working properly and make sure it is up to date.
- Keep your alarm on even while you are at home.
- Keeping information secure about your alarm will help ensure it stays secure.

CONTACT US

For more information on this and other department services, contact:

**Flathead County Sheriff's Office
Community Resource Unit
406.758.5602**

Or

Visit our website at www.flatheadcountysheriff.com

- Programs and Services
- Local crime mapping
- Crime prevention tips
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Professionals in Law Enforcement



**Flathead County
Sheriff's Office**

Home Safety



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Securing Your Home

We are no longer in the days in which you can safely leave your door unlocked when you run to the store or even leave your key under the mat for when your children may come home. These leaves an opportunity for your home and family to be at risk. You must keep your home safe and that doesn't mean you need to call the first alarm installer in the yellow pages either.

You can secure your home with proper steps. Some of the essentials are verifying your doors and windows are locked properly, exterior lighting covers your property and even the right design of your landscape can deter and protect your home. Take the time to review and analyze your home for weaknesses so that you can remedy them. Another way to ensure continued safety is joining a Community Watch because as a group you can help protect each other. Even without a Community Watch, you can help by reporting suspicious activity when you see it around you.

What can you do to help?

There are always things you can do to deter and stop crime.

- Know your neighbors
- Begin a Community Watch
- Do not leave your key under the mat but rather with a trusted friend or neighbor
- Record serial numbers (any electronics, firearms, appliances) and leave that list in a secure place.
- If you notice an unexpected open or broken window or door, do not go in rather call 9-1-1
- If you enter your home and it has been burglarized, freeze. Call the police and refrain from cleaning or picking up until they have taken a report and checked for evidence.

Locks and Doors

Locks:

Weak locks that could easily be forced open are noticed by thieves. Utilize these suggestions to improve your home safety:

- Do not hide spare keys.
- Make sure your locks and deadbolts are from reputable companies.
- If you lose your keys, replace your locks.
- Deadbolts assist in securing your home especially on exterior doors (even the one to your attached garage). A good deadbolt should have a minimum of a one inch throw (the section that goes into your door jam when secured) the strike plate should be reinforced with three inch screws.
- Make sure your locks are rated at a two or better and realize that you should replace your locks (at grade two) every five years as they wear out.

Doors:

Besides locking your door the strength can matter too.

- Purchase doors that are NOT hollow but rather solid wood, metal or fiberglass.
- Your hinges should be strong with non-removable pins.
- Doors to your attached garage should also have a deadbolt and locked as automatic door openers are not secure.
- If you have sliding glass doors make sure and add additional security by bracing it. Use a piece of plywood or metal rod and place it in the track.
- Know who's at your door. Install a peep hole to see who is there and make sure your children know not to open the door with an adult present.

Windows and Exterior

Windows:

- Make sure all your windows have locks and make sure they are locked whenever you aren't using them (especially when you go to bed or leave your home).
- Contemplate putting up thick drapes to block out curious viewers.
- Do not leave valuable items where they can be seen from a window or doorway.
- Do not leave your windows open more than a few inches, even while at home, as someone could attempt to pry them and slip in.

Exterior:

- Do not leave ladders or anything that could assist your thief in gaining access to your home.
- Install motion detector lights or low voltage lighting to the exterior of your home, keeping the perimeter well lit. Be sure to verify they are in working order and light bulbs are replaced frequently.
- Make sure your shrubs and plants are trimmed and taken care of, keeping them out of walkways and entrances.

For more information on Home Safety and protecting your assets contact the Sheriff's Community Resource Unit at 406.758.5602 or get more information at www.flatheadcountysheriff.com