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How to Prepare Your Home Before Going On Vacation

When you are on vacation, the last thing you want to worry about is whether your home is safe. Fortunately, there are a number of things you can do to minimize the risk of accident or burglary. Use this checklist from the experts at ServiceMaster by Homesley to help keep your home protected while you're away.

Vacation checklist for home safety

In the weeks leading up to your trip, begin prepping your home for your departure. Use the checklist below to ensure every task is completed appropriately before you and your family head out.

1. Make it look like you are still home.

The more you can make it appear that the house is being used, the less appealing it will be to potential vandals or thieves. To make it look like your family is still home, do the following:

- Request a neighbor to park at your house occasionally.
- Have someone keep the grass cut and the landscape maintained.
- Either stop the mail and paper while you are away or have a neighbor pick them up for you.
- Use a timer to turn on at least one or two lights in the home regularly.
- Refrain from posting on social media until you return home, as this can let your followers know that your home is empty.
- Have a neighbor or friend take your trash cans to the curb on designated trash days.
- Consider hiring a house sitter who can stay and keep an eye on things, especially if you're away for long periods of time.

2. Protect your home against crime.

While making it look like you're still home can do a lot in keeping your home safe, there are some other steps you should take to fully protect it. Take these steps to protect your home against any criminal activity:

- Bring spare keys inside the home if you have any hidden around the exterior.
- Lock all windows, doors, and gates before you leave.
- Consider installing motion-sensor lights around your home's exterior.
- Monitor your home with alarm systems and security devices.

3. Program your thermostat.

There are a few things that can be accomplished when you set your thermostat for vacation. First, it ensures that your home stays at a safe temperature and humidity level. Second, it prevents you from wasting energy and money on cooling or heating your home as you would for personal comfort levels.

Follow these seasonal guidelines to keep your home at a safe temperature range:

- In summer, an ideal temperature range is around 82 to 85 degrees.
- In winter, an ideal temperature range is around 60 to 65 degrees.

4. Unplug your appliances.

It may seem a little tedious to wander through your home unplugging every single appliance and charger, but the benefits make it worth it. Unplugging electronics like computers, TVs, cooking appliances, and more can prevent excess power usage while also reducing your risk of an electrical fire.

5. Check your water and plumbing.

If you're leaving for long periods of time, shut off the water valves to the toilets, washing machine, dishwasher, and sinks to prevent any accidental leaks or ruptures. You can even shut off the main water valve, depending on the time of year. In the winter, we recommend keeping the main water valve on to prevent pipes from freezing and bursting. Then, shut off the water heater or put it in "vacation mode" for more protection.

6. Prep your home for your return.

Coming home from vacation should be relaxing. To ensure there isn't much you need to do once you come home, do the following tasks right before you leave:

- Throw away that will go bad while you're gone.

- Place an open box of baking soda in the refrigerator to absorb odors.
- Take out the trash.
- Leave closet doors open to prevent musty air.

Now that you know what to do before leaving for vacation, your trip can be relaxing and worry-free.