

handy hints

- Make sure your house looks occupied. Closed curtains in the daytime make it look as if no one is home. It is worthwhile using automatic time-switches to switch lights – and a radio – on and off in downstairs rooms.
- Don't leave valuable items like TVs, videos or hi-fi equipment where they can be seen through windows.
- Lock the garage and shed with proper security locks, after putting all your tools safely away so they cannot be used to break into your house. If you have to leave a ladder out, put it on its side and lock it to a secure fixture with a 'close-shackle' padlock and heavy-duty chain.
- Don't have your home address showing on your luggage for the outward journey. Put this only on the inside of your cases.
- Finally, lock all outside doors and windows. If you have a burglar alarm, make sure it is set – and that you have told the police who the key-holder is, and that they know how to operate it.
- And just before you actually set off, it's worth allowing a quiet couple of minutes on the doorstep to check you've done all you had to do and taken everything you need with you.
- Have a happy holiday.



THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

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**WHEN YOU
STEAL AWAY
FOR A FEW
DAYS
REMEMBER..**

ADVICE ON KEEPING YOUR HOME SECURE

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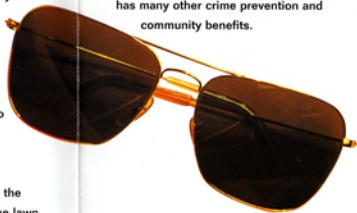
Everyone needs a holiday some time. And however much you like your home, there's nothing like a change of surroundings.

But you want to come home and find everything as you left it. Most premises are broken into when they are empty, so don't advertise that you're away on holiday.



You can repay the favour by doing the same for them. Warn whoever you leave your keys with **not** to put your surname, address or even your house number on your keys in case they fall into the wrong hands.

Is there a Neighbourhood Watch scheme where you live? It could help you keep your home secure while you're away, and has many other crime prevention and community benefits.



It's also a good idea to get help from your neighbours or friends. All you have to do is fill in the card opposite and give it to a friend or neighbour. It asks them to keep an eye on your home while you're away.

You could ask them to collect post left in the letter-box, sweep up leaves, even mow the lawn and generally make the place look lived in.

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Help reduce the risk of your home being broken into by taking some simple home security measures. The free booklet **Don't make it easy for the thief – A householder's guide to home security**, is available from your local police station.

- ☀ Leave small valuable items, like jewellery, on deposit at the bank, or consider installing a small floor safe. Don't lock internal doors or desks – they may be forced if someone does break in.
- ☀ Mark any other valuable items with your postcode followed by the house number or the first two letters of the house name. Then if they **are** stolen and later found, the police can identify and return them to you. Use the right security marker – DIY shops sell property-marking kits. Ask your local crime prevention officer for 'postcoded property' warning stickers to display in the front and back windows of your house. Also take photos of all valuable items. This is particularly important for those which may be unsuitable for marking.
- ☀ Arrange for pets to be properly looked after.
- ☀ Cut the lawns before you go.
- ☀ Cancel deliveries of milk, newspapers, etc., discreetly – don't announce your departure to a shop full of people. Only tell people who need to know you're going away. Post left in the letter-box or a tell-tale pile behind the door can be avoided by asking the Royal Mail to hold your post for up to two months under the **Keepsafe scheme**. When you return all your post will be delivered on the day of your choice. Contact Royal Mail Customer Services on 0345 111222 (local call rate) or your local post office.

help from neighbours/friends