

**Welcome to the  
Neighbourhood Watch,  
Monthly Bulletin: December Issue.**

The focus of this issue will be:

- **Holiday and Home Security**

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***Neighbourhood Watch – “Creating Safer Communities”***

**When you are on Holiday**

There are things you can do everyday to help make your home safer but when you are on holidays it is not as easy. A home that looks unattended is generally an easier target for a burglar.

The key to deterring burglars while you are away is to make your house look like someone's at home. Before heading off on holiday, here are some easy tips to prepare your home:

- Leave a radio on & tune it to a talkback station
- Use a timer on lamps to make it look like someone is inside
- Cancel deliveries, such as newspapers, or have a trusted person collect it for you

You should also have a trusted neighbour, or relative clear your letterbox & take your bin out & in, even if empty.

- 1 Hang old clothes on the line & leave old shoes outside the front door
- 2 If you are going away for an extended period of time, consider a house-sitter & arrange for your lawn to be mowed
- 3 Don't leave invitations or notes about holidays in plain view such as stuck on the fridge, next to the phone or on a whiteboard
- 4 If you are out for the evening, leave a light on and close the curtains.

**Here are some tips to manage your phone and messages before you go on holidays:**

- 1 Divert your home phone to your mobile or lower the volume on your phone
- 2 On your answering machine say 'We can't come to the phone right now'.

**Absence from Home Register**

Most Police stations operate an “Absence from Home Register”, where you can leave your contact information, times and dates you'll be away.

Police can use this information to perform checks in the area during usual patrols. If using this service, notify police when you return, especially if returning earlier than planned.

**Home Safety**

Create an invisible housemate - women living alone may choose to have a male relative or friend speak on their answering machine, such as **"We're unable to take your call, please leave a message."**

Ask before opening the door - if it is a stranger at the door, talk to them through a locked screen door.

- 1 Don't let strangers in - if someone asks to use your phone, direct them to the nearest phone box, or make the call for them.
- 2 Avoid telling people on the phone or at the door personal information such as marital status, working hours, employment & the number of people living at the house.
- 3 Check credentials of tradespeople - if in doubt, don't let them in. Ask for formal identification & ring the company to check.

### **Securing your home**

When thinking about how you can make your home safer, you should ask yourself a couple of questions.

- 1 Do I have adequate security?
- 2 Do the locks on doors & windows operate correctly?
- 3 Do I have timers for lights, TV and the radio?
- 4 Do my alarm and locks meet Australian standards?
- 5 Am I using my home security properly?

There is no point having the latest protection if it is not used for the purpose it was designed.

### **Here are some tips for the everyday care of your home:**

- 1 Leave a key with a trusted friend or neighbour instead of hiding a spare key that could be found.
- 2 Do not leave spare keys or car keys readily available inside the house.
- 3 Consider installing motion-activated lighting in your yard.
- 4 It is best to lock up any tools in a shed.
- 5 If you like pets, then dogs can be your best burglar alarm. If not, a 'beware of the dog' sign may still deter a burglar.
- 6 For unique items of jewellery and other collectables, consider a concealable safe.
- 7 If you purchase expensive electrical appliances, cut the boxes into pieces before recycling because boxes left on the nature strip can let burglars know what is new in your house.
- 8 Back-up computer hard drives and keep these copies in a different location.

Mark your property using an engraver or ultra-violet markers, with a 'V' (for Victoria) followed by your licence number. Markers can be purchased from various electrical stores in Victoria. Marked property is much harder for burglars to resell.

### **Useful websites**

<http://www.police.vic.gov.au>

<http://www.neighbourhoodwatch.com.au/>