

SAFETY SENSE

Safety Tips While You're Away

(NAPSA)—The family vacation has finally arrived, but so have anxieties about leaving your home vacant for an extended period. Property crime makes up approximately three-quarters of all crime in the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

“Don’t let your home become a target while you’re off having a good time,” said Richard Dale, Home Depot’s global product merchant for safety and security products. “A little common sense and a few simple and affordable projects will help divert burglars and give you peace of mind while you’re gone.”

Dale recommends making the following pre-vacation checklist:

A few days out

- Ask a neighbor to keep an eye on your house and to pick up the mail and newspaper. The typical burglar looks for a vacant home, so you want to have that “lived in” look while you’re gone, said Dale.

- Arrange to have your grass cut if you’ll be away for more than a week.

- Install deadbolts on every entry door. Deadbolts that are grade 2 or higher offer the best security.

- Make sure back doors, walkways, and entrances to garages and basements are well-lit at night since burglars prefer the cover of darkness.

- Linking outdoor lighting systems to motion sensors startle would-be intruders by instantly exposing them to light.

A day before

- Install timers on lamps in



several rooms to create the appearance that someone is home. From the street or sidewalk, your house should look occupied.

- Look for timers that stagger when the lights go on and off from day to day. These are best because they prevent a potential intruder from detecting a pattern.

- Clean up your yard so that all debris is removed and all patio furniture is secured in case of a storm.

Just hours away

- If you use gas, turn off the pilot light on your hot water heater, stove, oven and clothes dryer.

- Turn your main water valve off.

- Make sure all controls on your stove are turned completely off.

- Pull plugs on appliances, including computers and televisions, to guard against a power surge.

You're off

- Lock all doors and windows and the garage door. And then double check. Don’t be one of those travelers who has to return to make sure the front door is locked.