



Helpful Home Security Tips & Safety Checklist When Away

Whenever the holidays or summer break rolls around, many of our residents may plan to travel out of town to visit relatives, enjoy a relaxing vacation, or partake in joyful festivities afar. We would like to provide you with a few reminders that may help alleviate the stress of traveling while you are away with the following home security tips:

At your home

- Ask a neighbor or relative to check on your property while you are away
- Consider providing them with a phone number where you can be reached during your trip
- Ask them to pick up any mail, packages, flyers, etc. that may be left for you
- If possible, have them occasionally park their car in your driveway so it appears as if someone is at home
- Make sure that trash cans and recycling bins are put away after pickup
- Consider instead of boarding your pets, hiring a house- or pet-sitter while you are away

Lighting and Appearances

- Consider your home lighting an important to home theft and burglary deterrence
- Using multiple timers throughout your home to recreate a basic version of your normal schedule can protect your home significantly. For example, living room and kitchen lights perhaps come on from 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m., and then an upstairs bedroom light comes on from 9:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.
- Think about setting TVs on timers as well. If you usually watch the evening news before bed, consider placing the TV on a timer during this time (volume up) so that it appears someone is home
- Outdoor lights can be installed with motion sensors that will respond to movement on your property for an inexpensive price

Securing your Home

- Be sure to lock-up your home prior to your travel. Check every door and window
- Remember to turn on your security alarms before you leave!
- Should you have a sliding glass door, place a tract bar and/or dead bolt at this entry point
- Lock and check any sheds, barns or outbuildings that are on your property
- Remove any spare key or hide-a-key at your home. Thieves are well-trained to find hidden spare keys located around your property. Remove these and only give a spare to the neighbor or relative who is going to be watching your home while you are away.

Valuables and Computers

- Consider placing your valuables such as jewelry, cash, or important documents in a safety deposit box with your bank

- Turn off your computers while you are gone, and consider locking away laptops or hard drives with other important documents.
- If you are able to leave a vehicle in the driveway while you are away, be thoughtful to remove any garage door openers or GPS systems
- Keep a list of all valuables in the home – either video your items or draft a detailed description

Deliveries and Mail

- Contact the post office and ask that they hold your mail
- You may also go to <https://holdmail.usps.com/holdmail/> to place a mail hold for your address (can be placed up to 30 days in advance of leaving, or by 2:00 a.m. CST on the start day of the hold)
- Especially during the holiday season, make sure that packages are either held or picked up by a trusted neighbor in a timely fashion.
- If you receive newspapers, be sure to call and have these held as well.

Alert the Authorities

- Contact the Keller Police Department at **817-743-4522**, and fill out a Vacation House Watch Check form. <http://www.westlake-tx.org/index.aspx?nid=125> The officers will stop and check your home while you are away; and includes: windows, doors, vehicles on premises and suspicious activity

Additional Information

- Check your homeowner's insurance before departing on trips, to be sure it is current
- Either set home phone lines to go directly to voicemail after two rings, or turn the ringer off completely. A long-ringing phone can tip off thieves that no one is home
- Do not say in your phone voicemail message that you are out of town
- Before leaving, consider turning off the power to your garage door. This can make that potentially "easy" entrance a very difficult one for intruders

For those residents who remain at home during holidays and summer break, please report any suspicious behavior to 9-1-1. As many of you may know, Westlake experienced a few issues of criminal trespass during the summer and winter holidays in 2012. In these instances, a quick call to 9-1-1 made the difference in the apprehension and/or detention and questioning of those individuals.

If you wish to stay in contact with Town news while you are away, we will send any notifications of any adverse events that may occur in our community. Please remember to check your email for any updates.

If you need to reach a Town staff member directly, you can contact the main number for Town Hall at (817) 430-0941 and you will be routed to the appropriate person. We wish you and your family safe travels- whenever that time may roll around!