

Crime Prevention News

July 2010



Vacation Time

Vacation should be a time for relaxation and enjoyment. But it can become a time for crime victimization if appropriate crime prevention measures are not followed. Before you even think about packing your bags and loading up the car, implement some simple security precautions to

reduce your risk:

PLAN YOUR TRIP

Check your hotel's security recommendations and policies for your stay. Ask about and consider utilizing recommended shuttles or cab services. Research your destination for any crime trends / activity: the local community news and Google are great sources. If you are travelling abroad, check the U.S. State Department's Travel Alerts at: www.travel.state.gov

SECURE YOUR HOUSE / APARTMENT

Make sure that all the windows and doors of your house / apartment are secured. **July is prime time for break-ins** because so many people leave town, according to the Burglary Prevention Council. To avoid making your absence obvious, suspend your newspaper subscription and have your mail held at the post office. Another clear indication is if all your lights are off for extended periods. For about \$30, you can buy a timer for your lights in a local hardware store. If you have grass or hedges, do some trimming before you leave town. Turn the bell or ringer on your telephone down low so burglars won't be alerted to your absence by a ringing telephone. If you have call forwarding, forward your calls to a trusted neighbor or a relative.

SECURE YOUR WALLET

Do a little vacation cleaning: make sure that you are only taking absolute necessities. United States travel regulations now mandate passports for crossing the border, but if you're staying in the country, it's wiser to leave passports at home. Don't carry large amounts of cash: use credit, debit or the new prepaid travel cash cards. Make sure you photocopy the contents of your wallet, and keep handy the numbers to call in case you need to report your cards lost or stolen. For more information please go to: <http://europeforvisitors.com/europe/articles/amex-travelfunds-visa-travelmoney-cards.htm>

DON'T SPREAD THE NEWS

Only let a few key people in on your vacation plans — your boss, close relatives, a few friends, and possibly a trusted neighbor to keep an eye on your home. Give at least one of these people detailed information about where you're going and how to reach you. Otherwise, keep quiet, particularly on Internet networking sites. Don't post your plans on your **Twitter, My Space or Facebook** accounts. Not only can this information be used against you, it can give criminals the opportunity to impersonate you and send your friends and family fraudulent requests for money in your name. These types of Internet con games and scams are on the rise, so be careful with your personal information!

USE WI-FI CAREFULLY

Hotels usually offer free Wi-Fi Internet access. Never access sensitive information, such as your bank account or an online shopping site that requires credit card information, on a public Wi-Fi connection. You must be very careful about the kinds of sites you access through a public Wi-Fi connection, as anyone with even basic tech knowledge can see the information being transmitted over a hotel or coffee shop Internet connection. If you need to access your bank account, use a computer that doesn't connect via Wi-Fi. Most hotels provide both options.

Best of All, Enjoy Your Vacation!