

## ***Safe, smart and secure: How to protect your home these summer holidays***

by Adam Smith

Before the last of the Christmas wrapping paper is tidied up, we're thinking of those long summer days relaxing by the beach. But, before you pack up and head out of town, make sure you've thought about how to keep your home safe and secure while you're on holiday.



From Auckland to Wellington and Christchurch (and everywhere in between), homes are left unoccupied. It means there's plenty of opportunities for things to go wrong – or for unsavoury characters to take advantage.

Your home is your most valuable asset. So, before you head off on holiday, here are a few ways to ensure your property is protected.

### **Keep it secure**

Triple-check you've locked everything:

- Don't forget to secure the garden shed, and fasten window latches and deadbolts
- As an extra precaution if you have ranch sliding doors, put metal or wooden rods in the runners so they can't be opened from the outside
- Remove the 'secret' spare key. Anyone who is determined to break into your home will most likely find your secret spot.

Checking the locks may seem like obvious advice, but you'd be surprised how many people forget about a door or window that is seldom used. Check and re-check before you head off.

### **Keep it safe**

Remember to 'flick the switch' before leaving the house:

- Electrical fires can be devastating, so turn off as many appliances as you can at the wall. (A smoke alarm won't help if there's no one at home.)
- This can also help prevent damage from power surges

### **Keep it smart**

Nothing is more attractive to a burglar than an empty-looking house. So, give your home that 'lived in' look by:

- Asking a neighbour to collect your mail and put the bins out
- Leaving a spare car in the driveway and leaving your curtains open
- Keeping the gardens tidy by having someone mow the lawns while you're away
- Cancelling newspaper subscriptions, or offering them to your helpful neighbour

**Be careful about who you advertise your absence to**

- Be discreet on social media. Check your privacy settings and ensure that only those you trust can see your movements.
- If you have a landline, turn down the ringer on your phone – or have your calls forwarded to your mobile instead. That means anyone scoping out the property can't hear that there's no one home to answer.

Avoid the heartbreak of break-ins by following these simple property tips to stay smart, secure and safe these holidays.

**We hope the holiday season is a safe and happy one for you and your family!**