

# NEVADA STATE CRIME PREVENTION ASSOCIATION

## **Your Home Is Alone Summertime & The Stealing Is Easy**

As the hot summer months begin many people are probably planning trips to cooler destinations. **Unfortunately, criminals seldom take vacations!** During the summer months, many unoccupied homes will be burglarized. While there are no guarantees that a crime won't happen in your absence there is much that can be done to reduce the likelihood that you'll be the next target. Whether it be a weekend trip or a longer get-away **you must take steps to secure your home and eliminate the signs that advertise your absence. Locking doors and leaving lights on isn't enough. Criminals are opportunists. They'll start off by casing a neighborhood looking for soft targets - homes that are unoccupied.** Several newspapers tossed haphazardly on a driveway. Exterior lights left on in the middle of the day. A number of advertising brochures rubber banded to a front door handle. Lack of garbage cans in front of homes on trash pick-up days (especially after long holiday weekends). Vehicles parked, in driveways, nosed up against garage doors. (Even when CCR's allow, no one routinely leaves their vehicle in the driveway, parked in such a manner.) Once their attention has been garnered, burglars move in for a closer look. They'll knock or ring the bell with an ear pressed up against the door. If all's quiet, they'll start off by checking to see if any doors, windows, or gates have been left unlocked. *While many burglary's are forced openings, a good number of all residential burglaries still involve no force especially when doors and windows are not secured.* **When making travel plans, include the following before leaving your home alone:**

- Arrange with a neighbor or relative to watch residence in your absence.** Give them a key. Let them know where and how you can be reached in an emergency. Write their telephone number down so that you can check with them during your trip. Give them your vehicle description and license number.
- Arrange with a trusted neighbor to pick up your mail, newspapers, and circulars on a daily basis.**
- Make arrangements to have someone place a trash bag or receptacle out in front of your residence on garbage pick up days.**
- Leave a non-descriptive message on your answering machine.** Don't let callers know that you are out of town or won't be available for a couple days or weeks.
- Turn the ringer down on telephone** so that it can't be heard from outside your home.

- ❑ **Put electric garage door opener in “lock” mode.** If your garage door opener is not equipped with same, give some thought to disconnecting power to overhead door(s). Use your lock feature on your wall mount button if you have one.
- ❑ **Put interior and exterior lights on timers &/or photo-cells.**
- ❑ **Make sure your side gates are padlocked.** If you expect some kind of maintenance service, such as pool or lawn care, make arrangements for a trusted person to give them access. Avoid leaving your side gates vulnerable! Your side gates are favorite entering spot for criminals.

**Many of the aforementioned suggestions can easily be taken care of if you belong to a Neighborhood Watch.** Neighbors looking out for one another and reporting suspicious activity to the police in a timely manner is a proven deterrent. If you are not already involved in a Neighborhood Watch program please contact your local police agency.

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