

## **How to Keep Your Home Safe When Traveling**

Beaver County, PA – Preparing to go on vacation usually means making a to-do list of what to pack and what plans to make in advance.

But don't forget to make arrangements for your house when you are gone. People with nefarious plans could be watching properties in your community and notice the lack of activity when residents go on vacation. There are ways to make it less obvious that you are out of town.

"First do not post on social media that you are going out of town or currently out of town," said Beaver County Association of REALTORS® President Denise Molchen-Donnelly. "Even if you have your settings on private, you still don't completely know who is looking at what you are posting. By sharing snaps when packing for your trip or posting pictures of you lounging on the beach, you are advertising that your home is vacant."

In the summertime, many people leave their back or side doors unlocked for easy access. Additionally, windows are often left unlocked so residents can quickly open and shut them. Before leaving for any extended period of time, ensure everything is locked. This is also a good practice of daily life.

A growing pile of mail or a stack of newspapers in the driveway is another glaring indication that no one is home. Either cancel the services for the time you will be away or ask a neighbor to collect anything that comes in daily.

"Having timed inside and outdoor lights can make it look like you are home," said Molchen-Donnelly. "If it's in the budget to add this extra level of security, it's another way to deter criminals."

Many people hide extra keys around their property in case they are locked out. If you are traveling, it is highly recommended to remove these. Without anyone home, a lurker has plenty of time to search your property for those hidden keys.

"Don't forget to make sure garages, sheds and any cars left behind are locked. Protect your house by going the extra distance," added Molchen-Donnelly.