

## Safe Travels, Safe Home: Keeping Your Home Secure While on Vacation

Beaver County – June is National Safety Month, the National Safety Council's month of observance to "help keep each other safe from the workplace to anyplace." However, it's also the time of year when many homeowners have summer vacation on their minds. "It's easy to get caught up in the excitement of a vacation, but homeowners with travel plans should always remember to prioritize protecting their home while they're away," said Beaver County Association of REALTORS® President, Sara Lowman. "Leaving your home unattended for an extended period of time can make it vulnerable to break-ins, theft, property damage and more."

Oftentimes, the best way to protect an empty home is to make sure nobody knows it's empty. Homeowners should avoid posting about their travels online or mentioning them publicly until after they've returned home. Depending on the length of the vacation, asking a trusted neighbor or friend to collect the mail, mow the lawn and/or stop by to check in on things can also help the home appear occupied. Setting at least one light on a timer can help as well, making the home appear lit and lived in.

In addition to locking all doors, windows and gates/fences, traveling homeowners should remember to lock their garages, if applicable, and consider parking a spare car or a neighbor's car in the empty driveway. It's also important to collect any hidden spare keys that are outside, as many burglars are aware of popular hiding places (like underneath doormats, in potted plants and in fake rocks).

"Think of your valuables, too," Lowman added. "While taking these precautions can help avoid a break-in while you're away, it's always a good idea to play it safe and lock away anything important, just in case. Burglars want to get in and get out as quickly as possible, and most times, they won't spend time on trying to crack open a mounted safe or lockbox."

"Prioritizing home safety is important all year round," Lowman concluded. "Having a reliable security system installed always helps, but when leaving your home vulnerable, these precautions can go the extra mile in preventing unwanted damage, both physically and financially. Secure your home so you can relax and enjoy your vacation with peace of mind."

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*The Beaver County Association of Realtors® is a professional association that serves more than 600 members.*