

tising circulars and other debris regularly.

• **NOTIFY THE POST OFFICE** to forward your mail or have a trustworthy person pick it up daily.

• **CONTACT YOUR POLICE DEPARTMENT** and inform them of your proposed absence so they can be extra alert for suspicious persons. Special attention will be given to your premises while you are away.

• **NOTIFY A TRUSTED NEIGHBOR** of your absence and leave him a key. Direct him to vary the positions of drapes, shades and blinds. Timers may be purchased that will turn your lights on and off during your absence, but make sure these, too, are varied.

"Thieves are smart," points out Captain Byrnes. "If a burglar observes lights going on at precisely the same time every night, he'll know for sure that you're not home."

• **TURN DOWN YOUR TELEPHONE** to its lowest level. A ringing phone is another good indication that no one is home.

• **CHECK LOCKS** on doors, windows and garage. Padlocked gates will also discourage many would-be thieves.



Even if you're not planning a lengthy vacation, remember that your home can be burglarized while you're no further away than your nearest shopping center. The following tips are recommended by police experts for every homeowner and apartment dweller.

DEADBOLT LOCKS AND DOOR CHAINS offer the best protection. After you move into a house, it is a good idea to have the tumblers of the locks reset. After all, you don't know how many people are in possession of keys that will open the old locks!

LOCK WINDOWS or install window locks on windows left open for ventilation. This will limit openings to spaces small enough to forestall entry.

SLIDING GLASS DOORS are often the weakest point of suburban homes. Insert a stick or broom handle in the lower track to prevent easy opening.

TOOLS AND LADDERS should never be left lying around. Don't provide a thief with the perfect means to enter your home.

CLOSE YOUR GARAGE DOOR! An open garage with no cars inside tells the world that nobody is home.

Houses with attached garages are especially good targets for thieves, points out Captain Byrnes. "If the

garage door is open, the burglar can simply walk into the garage and fool around with the lock on the door to the house for as long as 10 minutes without being seen," he warns.

Stolen goods can be returned to their owners, but not without citizen cooperation. Many police departments are now encouraging people to engrave their driver's license number or social security number on valuable merchandise with the aid of electrical engravers which the police themselves will provide.

Farmington's new "Project Theftguard" is one such program being offered in the Observer area. Boy scouts will be canvassing the community to acquaint people with the advantages of engraving their valuables as well as recording the serial numbers of other items so they can be traced.

Window stickers reading "This house is protected by Project Theftguard" will also be given out.

"This type of program was originated in a small town in California and burglaries were completely eliminated as a result," points out Captain Byrnes. "Highland Park has tried it with considerable success, as well. It's amazing how many would-be thieves are discouraged from entering a home with a theftguard sticker. They just don't want to run the risk of being caught with merchandise that can be traced."

As it is now, too many people are completely unable to identify their stolen goods. "Many individuals don't even know the make of their television set," comments Byrnes. "They can tell us that it was a colonial style and that it had a 21" picture, but nothing else. With such a lack of information the item can rarely be returned to its proper owner."

Bicycle licensing is important for the same reason. Often, a bike may be taken for a joy ride by a youngster who later dumps it somewhere so that his parents won't see it. "It might be laying only a half mile from the owner's home but it can't be returned without the proper identification," explains Byrnes.


Amazed by the number of witnesses to a crime who never speak up or call the police, Byrnes recalls cases in which burglars have loaded merchandise onto waiting U-Haul trucks in broad daylight while neighbors merely watched.

One woman observed thieves loading a truck with practically all the suits from a clothing store at six o'clock in the morning without notifying the police. When questioned later she explained that she thought the suits were merely taken out to be dry-cleaned.

"People just don't seem to think that others can be so brazen," Captain Byrnes said. "But they can."

The fact that neighbors seldom report crimes of theft is attributed by Byrnes to the desire for not "getting involved" and for not "wanting to make trouble." "The fact is that by not reporting a possible theft, people are practically insuring someone else of getting robbed in the future," he reports.

Your home with its possessions does not have to be a sitting duck for burglars. By taking the necessary precautions you will be helping to fight crime as well as insuring for yourself a happier sun time season.



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