

It's that time of the year; time to take your RV out of storage, give it a good once over and plan your first trip of the season, time to get away from the office, the phones, the daily routine, and spend some quality time with your family and friends. Time to have some fun!

We all know how fun it is to load up the RV and leave on a trip, but what's happening back home while you're away? Is it obvious that nobody is home? Are you advertising the fact that nobody is home? Some not so honest people look for certain signs when they are deciding whose house to burglarize next. To make sure your entire trip is fun, to include returning home with everything intact, I would like to offer some simple suggestions to protect yourself from these not so honest people when you're away.

- Stop your mail or arrange for somebody to pick it up every couple days, or make mail-forwarding arrangements.
- Stop your newspaper
- Cut your grass and make arrangements for somebody to maintain it while you're away.
- Water all plants and make arrangements for somebody to water the plants while you're away, if it will be necessary.
- In the winter make arrangements to have walkways shoveled if it snows.
- Give a spare key to a neighbor you trust.
- Give a neighbor or friend your contact information.
- Call your home security system company and give them a point of contact if the alarm is set off.
- Check outside lighting and replace any bad bulbs.
- Ask a neighbor or friend to check your residence periodically. Have them check the operation of the furnace or air conditioning and make sure that timers and lights are working properly.
- Speaking of light timers, if you don't have any (on / off) light timers get some and install them on a few lamps in your house. I also use one for the front porch light. Set them to automatically turn lights on and off at various times during the night.
- Unplug all major appliances like TV's, stereos and computers.
- Turn the water heater breaker off or pilot light off.
- Have all trash picked up.
- Check your answering machine and change the message if necessary. Turn off the ringer on all telephones
- Close and lock all windows and doors. Close window blinds.
- Lock garage doors and windows.
- Leave a car in the driveway, but make sure the doors are locked. If you're taking your car ask a neighbor to park a car in your driveway if possible.

- Lock all valuables and important papers in a safe place such as a safe deposit box or home safe.
- Make sure all personal and home insurance policies are up to date.
- Double-check all doors and windows.
- Activate the alarm system.
- If you're going on an extended camping trip have a gardening service maintain your property. It makes it look much more lived in.
- Go and have fun.

There is no guarantee that your home and personal belongings will always be protected while you're away, but by following these simple steps you stand a much better chance of finding things the way you left them when you return from your trip. This checklist is an excerpt from my [Checklists for RVers E-book](#)

Happy Camping,

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