

# Business Insight

## Six tips to keep homes safe while on vacation this summer.

Kids are out of school for the summer, which makes it a popular time for family vacations. But don't forget to get your home in order before your getaway. Local home maintenance expert, Wayne Owczarzak, owner of Mr. Handyman of Wheaton-Hinsdale, offers tips for home preparation before vacation during National Safety Month. Mr. Handyman is a family-owned and operated professional handyman company.

### Prevent bad from becoming worse

Before leaving your home, resolve any home maintenance or repair issues that have the potential to go from bad to worse. Anything from a slow drip under the sink to a window or door that leaks when it's raining can go from bad to worse quickly causing damage to your home.

### Open vs. closed

Consider whether to open or close the blinds based on the season. Sun streaming through glass can be quite warming. Opening things up during winter months will reduce the amount of time the HVAC unit needs to run to warm the home. Reverse this and close the blinds and curtains, which will keep the sun's rays out and reduce the home's cooling needs during the warmer seasons.

### Lock it up

This sounds obvious, but homes have many entry points. July and August are months of the most frequent break-ins, and about 30 percent of home burglaries happen because of an unlocked window or door. Make sure all doors, windows and even basement access is secure. Before leaving, go door to door and window to window to ensure that all are locked and closed.

### No odor, no pests

Clean out the refrigerator and take out the trash, in that order. Milk spoils, produce rots and meat goes bad. Consider how long you'll be away and how likely it is you might be delayed in getting home, and clean out the refrigerator as appropriate. Anything that goes into the trash needs to then leave the home because decaying trash will attract roaches and other pests.

### Final sweep

Always do one last check before leaving. Last-minute trips back inside can leave lights on, toilets running or previously locked doors unlocked. The last person to exit the home should be responsible for making the final check.

### Pool maintenance

The pool is another mechanical system that generally runs from a timer. Heavy rains can fill the pool and require it to be flushed. If pool upkeep is handled by the owner, such as checking PH, cleaning, adding chemicals and algacide as needed, an extended trip may warrant hiring maintenance help.



Although these tips seem obvious, with all the preparations before a vacation, home safety can become an afterthought, Owczarzak said. "National Safety Month is the perfect opportunity to spotlight home protection and offer tips to keep homes safe during this busy travel season."

Mr. Handyman is part of a network of independently owned and operated franchises with more than 200 locations throughout North America, that provide commercial and residential property maintenance, repair and improvement services. Entrepreneur magazine has recognized Mr. Handyman as one of the fastest growing service-oriented franchise systems and the No. 1 handyman service.

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