

Beware the Burglar!

Are you going on vacation and worried that your home may be burglarized in your absence? In a recent telephone conversation, Captain Charles Price of the Rochester Police Department offered suggestions that can help to protect property. First, neighbors should be informed of any intended vacation. "They're the people that are right there and know your home and what goes on in the neighborhood."

Leave a key with someone and ask them to check the house daily. Cancel mail and newspaper delivery during a vacation or have someone pick them up. Accumulated newspapers and mail tell burglars that no one is home. The same is true for milk delivery.

Captain Price also recommended timer switches that turn on lights or radios. He said that if the burglar suspects someone is in the house there is less likelihood of his attempting an entry since it is a more serious offense to enter a dwelling that's occupied. Tape recorders that answer the phone with a message such as, "Leave your name and number and we will call you back in a few minutes," can help deter burglars that call first to see if anyone is home.

The most common carelessness in home protection is the failure to lock doors, especially garage doors, or to purchase the wrong kind of lock. The police captain claimed that the safest lock is a bolt lock and added that it is important to get a special bolt-bar lock to put in the channel of sliding doors.

Are homes more vulnerable while families are away on vacation? That depends on the area and who is casing the neighborhood, according to Price. "If someone is watching your house and you leave for five minutes, they're going to try to get in."

Last month the Rochester Department started the campaign Stop Burglary Rochester. Captain Price said it is still too early to determine its effectiveness, but that many are already participating in the property registration program using special electric engraving tools to mark Social Security numbers on valuable items. Serial numbers and the location of the engraving on the item are registered with the police.

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