

Top Tips for Keeping Your Home Safe in the Sunshine

Without meaning to jinx things, the weather has been pretty lovely in the last week or two (apologies if you're now reading this in soggy September). So, a little earlier than usual, we thought we would put together our yearly tips on keeping your home safe while you're out soaking the sun.

In the garden...

If you're planning to enjoy the summer out in the back garden this year, all it takes is a few precautionary steps to help protect your home and possessions.

Close outside doors and windows: Even if you leave a room for a few minutes, make sure the windows and doors to the outside are closed and preferably locked. Bear in mind that your contents insurance may not cover you if you someone has entered your home through an open door or window.

Lock up your garden items: We all love to whip out the barbie as soon as the sun peeks through the clouds, but it's important to make sure that, once you're done, you keep your outdoor items just as safe as those inside the house. Robbers will rub their hands at the sight of pricy items like lawnmowers, outdoor dining sets and bicycles if they are left around, so make sure they are all locked away in a shed or garage.

That also goes for items that can help a robber enter your property - such as ladders or tools. Home insurance claims have been denied because burglars used an unsecured ladder to enter a property.

Turn on your alarm: Even if you're only popping to the top of the road, make sure you punch the code into the keypad. There's a chance that your insurance company will not pay out if you '‘forgot' to turn your alarm on, and either way it's always better to be safe than sorry. Read the Confused.com Guide to Burglar Alarms to find out more.

Heading away...

We all have a friend or relative that constantly worries about having left a window open. If you're planning to get away this summer, just follow these simple measures to ensure it's not you that carries that guilty feeling on the plane with you.

Don't hide spare keys under the plantpot: Hiding your key is a trick that burglars are more than aware of. Don't gift them entry to your home; leave it with a (trusted) neighbour instead.

Don't leave the house empty for too long: If you're away for some time, it might be wise to get a friend or neighbour to occupy the house for at least a few days over the length of your stay (more frequently if you have a goldfish to feed!).

Some home insurance policies require that a property is not left empty for lengthy spells (typically 30 days). So if you're lucky enough to be away for that long, try and get someone to stay in your home for at least one night a month in order to keep your home insurance valid, as well as to check that nothing untoward has happened. If in doubt, read your policy small print to find out the exact vacancy period limit.

Clear the mail: There's no better sign of your absence than a dozen bottles of milk on your step or a pile of letters poking out of your letter box. Ask the neighbours to collect any excess mail while you're away - thieves are always on the lookout for any obvious clues to an empty home. Likewise, if you have milk delivered, don't forget to cancel it for the period you're away.

It's not just doors and windows that need securing: If a dog flap is large enough for a burglar to fit through, your home insurance policy might be voided in the event of a claim. Make sure you secure any such entry points before heading off on your hols.

Double check everything's locked: The final hurdle. You may be racing to the airport or rushing for the train, but make sure you check all windows and doors are locked and the burglar alarm, if you have one, is set before you go.

About the Author

Checked if your [contents insurance](#) covers you whilst your away? If you need to upgrade visit Confused.com and compare the top [home insurance](#) providers to see who can help.

