

Leaving Town? Secure Your Home!

The Thanksgiving holiday is fast approaching and many Broward County residents will be taking vacations or leaving town to visit with family and friends. The Broward Sheriff's Office reminds everyone that there are certain security-minded steps to take before leaving town. Remember to stop all newspaper deliveries, ask a trusted neighbor to pick up your mail and contact your BSO district office to sign up for our *Home Watch* program.

When you sign up for BSO's *Home Watch* program, a deputy, community service aide or BSO volunteer will check on your home regularly while you are on vacation. An exterior check of your home will be conducted to make sure there have been no unlawful entries and that no other obvious problems have occurred outside of your home. To sign-up for this FREE service, visit www.sheriff.org/homewatch and download the form. Complete it and return it to the BSO district that serves your community. You may also stop by your BSO district office and our staff will help you complete the form. Knowing that your home is being protected will put your mind at ease during your vacation.

Before you leave town it is important to make sure your home appears occupied. Place timers on your lights and set them to turn on and off at different times. Lock your garage door and disconnect the automatic opener. Most importantly, tell a trusted neighbor that you are going to be away and ask them to dial 911 immediately if they see anyone on your property.

Here are some additional home security tips to keep in mind:

- Install good locks on all doors and windows and use them.
- Give a spare key to your trusted neighbor and provide them with an emergency telephone number to reach you.
- Have someone mow your lawn if you'll be away more than a couple of weeks.
- Never leave a message on your telephone answering machine stating you are out of town.
- Leave your window blinds as you normally would if you were home.
- Invite your neighbor to park their car in your driveway.

The men and women of the Broward Sheriff's Office are committed to keeping you safe. We can only offer our Home Watch program in our patrol jurisdictions. If you live outside of a BSO jurisdiction, contact you city or town's police department and ask if they could offer a similar service.

I wish you all a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving!

Sheriff Al Lamberti