

The Huestis Insurance Group



Is Your Home Alone?



Your bags are packed, the car is loaded and your tickets are in hand. You're finally ready for that relaxing summer getaway you've been anticipating all year...or so you think. In the last minute hustle and bustle of planning a vacation, many Canadians leave their "home alone" and fail to plan for its proper protection. Empty houses are attractive targets for break-ins, which can be a real threat for homeowners. In 2008, police in Canada reported over 200,000 break-and-enters, with nearly six in 10 of them being residential homes. "Planning ahead is essential to ensure that your return home doesn't leave you with unplanned surprises," said Wayne Ross, insurance expert at Aviva Canada. "The key is to take a few simple steps to make it look like you haven't left at all."

Consider the following tips the next time you are travelling for an extended period of time:

 **Keep it to yourself:** You or your kids posting holiday plans or live updates on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter may seem harmless enough, but it could alert would be thieves to an empty house.

Get a house sitter: Have someone stay there or have a trusted neighbour check-in daily. Give this person a key – don't hide it.

Set timers: Set lights on timers in different rooms of your home.

Newspaper and mail delivery: Piled up mail or newspapers are an obvious giveaway that the homeowners are out of town – cancel or temporarily divert deliveries, or have your neighbours pick them up in a timely fashion.

Have your yard maintained: Depending on the time of year, arrange to have your lawn mowed and your grass watered.

With these tips in mind, you can concentrate on enjoying your summer escape and coming back to your home revitalized. More information is available from your insurance broker or online at www.avivacanada.com.

www.newscanada.com