Protect Your Home While on Vacation Checklist

Use this checklist before your next trip to help protect your home, prevent avoidable problems and leave with greater peace of mind.

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PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM WATER DAMAGE

- ☐ **1. Turn off your main water supply.** If you'll be away for several days, shutting off the water can help prevent a plumbing problem from becoming a major one. If you have irrigation, a pool or other water-dependent equipment, make appropriate arrangements first.
- ☐ **2. Check for leaks.** Look under sinks and around toilets, washing machines, dishwashers and other water-using appliances. Fix any running toilet or known leak before you leave.
- ☐ **3. Check your sump pump.** If you have one, make sure it is working properly before you leave, especially if heavy rain is possible.

THINK ABOUT TEMPERATURE & ELECTRICITY

- ☐ **4. Adjust your thermostat.** Set it appropriately for the season, but don't turn the heat completely off in cold weather.
- ☐ **5. Set your water heater to vacation mode.** If your water heater has a vacation setting, use it for an extended trip. Remember to change it back when you return!
- ☐ **6. Unplug unnecessary electronics.** Unplug chargers, countertop appliances and electronics you don't need while you're away.
- ☐ **7. Put a penny in your freezer.** Place a penny on top of a small cup of ice before you leave. If it has sunk when you return, investigate whether the freezer lost power and whether food may have thawed.
- ☐ **8. Check your refrigerator.** Clear out foods that may spoil while you're away.

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MAKE YOUR HOME LOOK LIKE SOMEONE IS THERE

- ☐ **9. Put lights on timers.** Use timers or smart lights to make your home look occupied.
- ☐ **10. Think about blinds and curtains.** Keep them positioned in a way that looks natural for someone who is home.

- ☐ **11. Pause mail and newspaper delivery.** Don't let mail, newspapers or other deliveries pile up.
- ☐ **12. Take your garage door opener with you.** If your car will be parked away from home, don't leave the opener inside it.
- ☐ **13. Lock doors and windows.** Do one final walk-through before you leave.
- ☐ **14. Don't advertise your absence.** Avoid announcing your trip publicly on social media. If you post while away, limit visibility to people you trust.

HAVE SOMEONE KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS

- ☐ **15. Ask a trusted neighbor, friend or family member to check on your home.** They can collect packages, bring in mail, water indoor plants and make sure everything looks normal.
- ☐ **16. If you live in a gated or private-access community, check with security.** Follow your community's established vacation-watch procedure and provide only the information security needs.
- ☐ **17. Leave emergency contact information.** Make sure someone you trust knows how to reach you and who to contact if there is a problem at home.

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A FEW MORE THINGS WORTH DOING

- ☐ **18. Check smoke and carbon-monoxide detectors.** Make sure they are working and have fresh batteries if needed.
- ☐ **19. Take out the trash.** Don't leave food waste or other trash behind that could become a problem while you're away.
- ☐ **20. Take photos before you leave.** Photograph thermostat settings, appliances or anything else you may later wonder whether you turned off or adjusted.
- ☐ **21. Give yourself enough time.** Don't make your departure morning a race. Start your home-prep list a day or two before you leave when possible.

One last reminder: Keep this check-list with your travel documents or save it on your phone so you can use it again before your next trip.