

BELT TEAM REPORT:

“Keeping Your Home Safe During The Holidays”



If you're headed "over the river & through the woods to Grandmother's house" for the holidays, here are 10 tips to keep your home safe while you're gone!

(1) Be careful with your status updates on Twitter, Facebook, etc. Don't be too specific. For example: "Can't wait to see Grandma & Grandpa" might be better than "Leaving for Ohio in 2 hours. Back on Sunday."

(2) Take advantage of the "nosy neighbors" you have (assuming you trust them!). Ask them to keep an eye out while you are away. Make sure they know how to reach you in case of an emergency.

(3) If you still have a newspaper delivered instead of reading online, make sure you suspend delivery. (And ask a neighbor to keep your driveway clear of the various "throwaway publications" that appear.)

(4) Think twice about setting up an auto-responder or voice mail message that says you are out of town - especially if you work from a home office. A better idea might be to just say you are not checking messages until a certain date (as if you're taking a "Stay-cation".)

(5) Set up timers on certain lights in your house. Install motion detector lights outdoors. One of my neighbors (who happens to know a bit about this topic since he is a Sheriff!) gave me some extra advice about this particular item. He said, “My two cents on timers. If you use them, stagger the times they go on and off, create the illusion of movement in the house. Most people have them go on and off at the same time. Instead, have downstairs timers go on during normal dinner & TV time, and then go off. Then have upstairs timers go on like you’re going to bed. Works great and gives the bad guys doubts if you’re home or not.” GREAT ADVICE!

(6) Don’t forget to lock the interior garage door. Exterior doors are relatively easy to compromise. And lock ALL of your windows.

(7) Stop your mail. Or have a neighbor collect it daily.

(8) Don’t publish your physical address or personal information on your social media profiles on LinkedIn, Facebook, etc. It’s amazing how many people advertise their birthdate, home address and more – just because the site asked you to fill it in when you set up your account. It’s not just children who do this, but many adults who are new to the world of social media are guilty of this as well. Even if your site is “friend-protected”, you’d be surprised at what web-savvy folks can find out. Be discreet!

(9) If your home is in an area of the country where it’s cold (as in freezing), don’t turn your heat off. You don’t want your pipes to freeze!

(10) You can always employ the tactics of [Kevin McAllister in “Home Alone”!](#)

SELLERS: Make sure you read our [blog post about whether or not it’s a good idea to sell during the holidays](#). In general, low inventory & low housing supply mean good things for you. But there are lots of things to consider.

BUYERS: Inventory is low and even as we approach the holidays, the best homes are selling quickly. If you would like to buy now & celebrate the New Year in your new home, make you use our [state-of-the-art home search site](#). Listings are updated on our system faster than other sites so you won’t miss out on your Dream Home!

If you're thinking of buying or selling a home, Contact The Belt Team at (703) 242-3975 for a more in-depth discussion & analysis - because it's only the neighborhood YOU live in (or you WANT to live in) that matters. We'll be happy to schedule a consultation and get very detailed about "YOUR Market" so that you can make the decision that is best for YOU!



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