



A few things to think about before leaving home.

HOME CHECKLIST

- Check your home insurance policy for your specific "away" requirements. Many insurance policies have clauses that will void coverage if your home is left unoccupied and unattended for extended periods of time. During "normal home heating months" many insurance companies require that you have someone check your home at least once a week (if not more often) to mainly ensure pipes have not frozen or ruptured, etc.
- For peace of mind travel and to satisfy your home insurance policy, hire The Bear Necessities Home Watch Service to regularly check the interior/exterior of your home.
- Advise The Bear Necessities Home Watch Service of your departure and return dates/times.
- Leave house key and trip itinerary with The Bear Necessities Home Watch Service
- Advise a neighbour that The Bear Necessities Home Watch Service will be checking your home, and provide your neighbour with our telephone number.
- Arrange for care of pets.
- Make arrangements for house plants
- Confirm lawn mowing arrangements
- Confirm snow removal arrangements
- Turn off exterior water taps
- Remove perishables from the refrigerator in event of a power outage, you don't end up with a mess or, worse, an appliance that needs to be replaced.
- Empty bread box, potato bin, etc. of perishable foods
- Dispose any garbage (If necessary, inform The Bear Necessities Home Watch Service of your next garbage pickup day/time)
- Eliminate possible fire hazards (unplug appliances, etc.)
- Save heating money and turn down the thermostat in the winter (10°C ⇌ 16°C)
- Turn water heater down to "vacation" mode
- Your answering machine message should say that you are "unable to come to the telephone", and not that "you are away".
- Turn-off or unplug your answering machine if it will not be in use.
- If answering machine will be left on, you should check your answering machine messages while away.
 - Return important messages to reinforce the idea that your home is not vacant.
 - Clear off non-important messages while you are away to help ensure that the answering system will not inform callers that the message mailbox is "full".
- Keep heating and air-conditioning systems on to prevent damage from frozen pipes in cold weather or mould in hot weather.
- Suspend cable or satellite and Internet service. Ensure wireless internet and computers are turned off.
- Unplug electronics that could be damaged by a power surge.
- Make plans for pool / hot tub maintenance during your absence.



Lighting & Sound

- Set-up a timed lighting system
- Double check your timed night lighting system
- Change the light bulbs on all interior lighting in consideration of automatic timing devices.
- Motion-sensitive exterior lighting is recommended.
- Change the light bulbs on all exterior lighting to ensure longer life and consider using timers.
- Install multiple automatic timers to give the impression of residents moving through the home.
- Stagger your lights and radios by setting the timers in different rooms to go on and off at different times - this gives the impression of residents moving through the rooms.

Personal Belongings

- Store valuables in a safe place
- Identify your belongings by engraving or indelible marking.
- Photograph or videotape each room of your home and the contents of drawers and closets.
- Store valuables such as jewellery, documents and heirlooms in a safety deposit box or home safe.

Security & Alarm Systems

- Ask a reliable person to act as an additional contact with your security company and notify the security company of this addition. The Bear Necessities can provide this service. Create a security code specific to The Bear Necessities Home Watch Service.

Exterior Home Security - Doors, Windows & Entry Points

- Lock all doors and windows
- Close chimney flues, as they can be used as a point of entry by small animals and birds.
- Install deadbolt locks on all exterior doors.
- Install a locking pin in windows and sliding doors.
- Lock the garage door manually for additional security if you have an electronic garage door opener.
- Place a piece of wood or similar solid object in the tracks of your sliding doors.
- Secure all pet doors. They are a favourite point of entry for burglars, and can also be used by small animals and birds.

Mail Re-Routing & Deliveries

- Stop deliveries (i.e. newspaper) Suspend or cancel newspaper and magazine subscriptions.
- Arrange to have your mail collected by a reliable person or Have Canada Post hold your mail or arrange collection of your mail from your mailbox. *We would be happy to pick up the mail from your mailbox. Canada Post has an authorization form for the pick-up of parcels. This form must be submitted in person to your Post Office prior to your departure.*
- For extended absences, arrange mail forwarding with your local post office.

Perimeter Security

- Arrange snow shovelling (or lawn maintenance) and sidewalk/driveway clearing of your home. *The Bear Necessities Home Watch Service would be pleased to provide this service.*
- Ask The Bear Necessities Home Watch Service to regularly inspect the perimeter of your property.
- Consider asking someone to occasionally place one of their bags of weekly garbage and recycling container on the curb in front of your house to give the added appearance of ongoing occupancy.
- Install deadbolt locks on all perimeter doors.

Automotive Security

- Ask The Bear Necessities Home Watch Service to have your vehicles brushed of snow to give the impression of regular use.
- Consider asking someone to routinely move your car, or even leave their car(s) in your driveway to match the lived-in look of your home.
- If your vehicle remains immobile for an extended period, disconnect the battery cables to extend battery life and to prevent auto theft.

Your Arrival Back Home

- Will you be arriving home after the grocery store is closed? Can The Bear Necessities Home Watch Service stock your fridge with the basics? Give us your grocery list and we can help out.
- Ask The Bear Necessities Home Watch Service to turn your heat up to your desired temperature.