

It's that time of year when vacations are on the increase but, unfortunately, so are crimes. Below are some tips from the Veolia website to help you enjoy your vacation without becoming a victim.

While you're away:

- Ask a friend or neighbor to keep an eye on your house or apartment. Have him or her bring in your mail; move vehicles that are not garaged to make it appear that they have been used. Make arrangements to have your yard mowed regularly while you're away.
- Be careful what you post on social media sites. Wait until you come home to post vacation pictures.
- Be careful what you say on your answering machine or voice mail. Callers don't need to know that you're away for a week, they just need to know that you can't answer the phone right now.
- Notify the police if you're going on vacation for an extended time. If you have a local neighborhood watch program, you may want to contact them.
- Leave your curtains exactly as you normally keep them when you're home. Noticeable changes are a signal that you may not be around. Be sure expensive items, like jewelry or cash, are not in view of windows.
- Use a light switch timer that can be programmed to turn your lights on and off automatically. Criminals watching your house will assume someone is home when they see the lights going on and off.
- Either stop your mail and newspapers or arrange to have someone pick them up regularly. To stop your mail, just go to the [United States Postal Service Web site](#); you can place a "stop" order in a matter of minutes.
- Remove that spare key you've hidden under the mat, above the doorframe, under the flowerpot, or in the plastic rock that isn't fooling anyone. If a criminal determines you are out of town, s/he'll be looking for it in all those obvious places!

When you travel:

- Clean out your wallet or purse before going on vacation; take only essential credit cards.
- Carry your purse close to your body, or your wallet in an inside front pocket.
- Pack as lightly as possible. Heavy, cumbersome bags make you more vulnerable to robbery & muggings.
- Expensive, designer luggage can draw attention to your belongings. Pack your things in inconspicuous bags.
- Carry-on anything you may need or of value (ex., medication, jewelry).
- Don't display expensive or valuable items (ex., jewelry, cameras, bags).
- Stick to well-lighted, well-travelled streets at all times.
- Always lock your car, and leave valuables out of sight, preferably locked in the trunk.
- Don't leave jewelry, money or other items lying around the hotel room when you go out. Don't leave them unattended at poolside or the beach, either.
- Make sure rooms are securely locked and chains fastened when you are in the room. You should know who is knocking before you answer the door. If they say they are from the hotel, confirm with the hotel operator that they are, in fact, from the hotel.
- Be sure your room is locked when you leave it. Don't leave room keys lying out at the swimming pool or beach.