Happy Holidays

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Avoid Having Your Holiday Stolen

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The Grinch may be a storybook character, but there are plenty of sinister souls out and about during the holiday season that would make Mr. Grinch very proud.

According to the National Association of Realtors® in collaboration with Houselogic, there are five ways you can keep home-based holiday crimes at bay.

Be Cyber-wise.

- Avoid posting to your multitude of family and friends on Facebook that you will be gone over the holidays or that you received an awesome, expensive gift. Cyber-savvy crooks could view this information and target your home for a break-in.
- Accept only people you know as friends and followers on social media sites.
- Limit the sharing of personal information online.

Lock your doors.

This seems like a "no-brainer," but security company ADT says 40 percent of all burglaries are termed as "no force entries." This means the thieves gain entry through unlocked doors and windows.

- Check and lock all doors and windows.
- Use your deadbolt (if you have one).

Don't give vandals a chance to act.

- If you enjoy turning your front lawn into a winter wonderland, be aware that vandals can decide on a spur of the moment to destroy your property or steal expensive lawn decorations and lighting.
- Install motion detector lights on all sides of your house and make sure they're visible from the road, if possible.

Deny easy access to the garage.

- Avoid keeping your garage door opener in your car where clever thieves can get to it to gain easy access to your expensive tools and lawn equipment.
- Don't use your garage as a hiding place for gifts.
- Make sure your garage door is closed and locked, as well as any side doors.

Display the tree, not the gifts.

It's exciting to have a beautifully decorated tree in the front picture window for all to see and difficult to refrain from placing the festive gifts under it. When you're not at home potential thieves can see not only your tree through your front window, but all the gorgeous, expensive gifts as well.

- Don't put your gifts out until Christmas Eve.
- Dispose of product boxes at a recycling center and not in your garbage cans.

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