

Home Safety During the Summer

The summer months bring beautiful, warm weather and longer days that keep families and children busy. Getaways, vacations, barbecues, and pool parties will surely be on many agendas, so safety and crime prevention should always be kept in mind while enjoying your summer. Here are a few tips to make your summertime activities better:

Leaving town for a getaway or vacation:

- Never advertise on social networking sites any of your plans to leave including the destination, duration and who is going. This also applies to your children who may have a tendency to post everything about themselves. Show-off your getaway/vacation photos and experiences when your return
- Stop all mail and newspaper deliveries or have someone get those articles on a daily basis. Also ensure that you will not be receiving and special deliveries from USPS, FedEx, UPS, etc.
- Trust a relative, friend or neighbor to watch your residence including picking-up those flyers, brochures and business cards left behind by solicitors. These are also a good indicator to crooks that no one is home. Have a neighbor be wary of solicitors especially when they come upon your empty house. The more eyes watching your residence, the better
- Have someone place your trashcans on the street and put them back during the garbage pick-up days
- Have someone house sit. If that is not feasible, place house lights on timers and let your trusted neighbors know the length of your absence and who, if anyone should be at the residence. Your neighbors should know how to reach you and they should know Sheriff dispatch number, 805-654-9511, in case officers need to respond
- Make the residence looked lived-in by having the lawn and shrubbery cut and having vehicles parked in the driveway. Ask your neighbor to park their vehicle in driveway to make the residence looked occupied
- If you have a dog, keep the dog on the property if possible. A barking dog, especially a large one, is a good deterrence for a burglar
- Lock and double and triple check all doors and windows including second story windows. Think about placing a bar or pole in a window track to prevent the window from being forced open. Also keep all ladders and stepping apparatuses locked in the garage and not kept in the backyard so they can be used to make an entry into your residence on the second floor
- Utilize the Thousand Oaks Police's vacation check program. Call 805-449-2760 a week before your anticipated departure
- Target harden your property by having Thousand Oaks Police's VIPs or Crime Prevention Unit go to your residence and give advice on what you can do to make your property a deterrence for thieves. 805-449-2760 or 805-371-8362

- Do not have the message on your answering machine give any indication that you are out of town or any information about you or your family, including last names. Consider call forwarding your telephone calls to your personal cellular phone
- Lock-up animal/pet doors. Burglars can and will use these doors to break-in the residence
- Lock side gates and any entryways to the backyard
- Document all valuables via serial numbers, photos and videos just in case they are lost or stolen
- Many residents have brought surveillance systems and CCTV systems. Consider this possibility if you are truly worried about a possible burglary
- Use exterior motion lights. These are a tremendous theft deterrence
- Keep shrubbery, plants and trees properly trimmed to purge any potential hiding spots for crooks
- If the residence is equipped with an alarm system, use it! Ensure the alarm system is working properly and notify the alarm company that they should immediately notify the police—and not call the residence—should there be an activation

Other general safety tips include:

- When barbecuing, have a grill safety zone free from clutter, away from structures and children should be warned to stay away from this area and that no playing is allowed anywhere near the grill. Have a fire extinguisher or water bottle nearby just in case those flames get out of control
- Review emergency plans, including what to do during a fire, how to get out of the house, where to go/meet, etc. Replace fire alarm batteries and ensure they are working properly
- Security doors and windows should have a quick release latch so occupants are not trapped during an emergency
- Summer is also sees a surge in home improvement projects. Make certain that the correct clothing, tools and safety equipment is used. If contractors are used, try not to leave the contractors by themselves
- Swimming pools are a huge hit during the hot days. First, a fence or barrier should enclose the pool to ensure small children cannot get access to the pool. A gate alarm should also be used. Keep rescue equipment nearby and remove all toys from the pool afterwards to stop the temptation of a child to get in the water to get a toy(s)
- Adult supervision during pool parties is vital. Always have an adult watch the children regardless on the swimming skill level. Children will exaggerate their skill level and horseplay in the pool that will lead to injuries. Rotate the adult supervision on watching the children to keep the eyes fresh
- Update your personal first-aid and CPR training. Have medical/first aid supplies and kits nearby and accessible.