



New Berlin Police Department

16300 West National Avenue, New Berlin WI 53151 • (262) 782-6640 • nbpolice.org

Vacation Notification Program

This program is a collaborative effort between the community and the New Berlin Police Department. The purpose of this program is to serve as a conduit between community members and the police department to facilitate the exchange of information. Community members are able to make notification to the police department that their residence/property will be vacant for a prescribed period of time and provide emergency contact information should a need arise. The police department in turn will provide information on "best practices" prior to leaving for a vacation and tips on "target hardening" or measures that can be taken to further protect your residence.

At the New Berlin Police Department, we utilize the principal of the **Crime Prevention Triangle** in our prevention and outreach efforts. This is a concept that a crime needs three elements to exist in order to occur; the offender's **Desire, Ability & Opportunity** to commit a crime:

- **Desire:** The desire of an offender to commit a crime – Generally, we as citizens cannot impact or remove an offender's desire to commit a crime. If someone is intent on committing a crime, he/she will attempt to do so.
- **Ability:** The ability of an offender to commit a crime – Generally, we as citizens cannot impact the ability of an offender to commit a crime. He/she will find a way. He/she can be thousands of miles away, use telephones, internet... Not even physical impairment will stop some from committing crimes.
- **Opportunity:** The offender's opportunity to commit a crime – This is where we can take action to prevent a crime from occurring. By removing or reducing the opportunity for a crime to occur, we have broken the "Crime Prevention Triangle".

Along with providing the police department with your emergency contact information, please review the associated material which includes "best practices" and "target hardening" tips intended to be utilized for the purpose of reducing or eliminating an offender's **opportunity** from committing a crime against your property while you're away. We have also included tips to reduce the chances of home systems failing and causing significant property damage while you're away.

Should you have any questions regarding the Vacation Notification Program, please contact the New Berlin Police Department and ask to speak to a representative from the Community Services Section: 262-782-6640

Pre-Vacation Home Checklist

- ✓ **Hold the mail and any other regularly scheduled deliveries:** If you are going to be gone for an extended period of time, put a stop on the mail, newspapers or any other regularly scheduled deliveries. Alternatively, ask a trusted neighbor or family member to retrieve the deliveries in your absence.
- ✓ **Lighting:** Consider utilizing timers or other programmable devices to manage your lighting while your away. Configure your lighting in a manner which is random or otherwise offers a perspective that the residence is occupied.
- ✓ **Vehicle(s):** If possible, secure any vehicle(s) left at home inside of your garage to reduce the likelihood of it being targeted by an offender. Additionally, the garage may offer additional protection from damage caused by severe weather.
- ✓ **Windows:** Adjust your blinds and lock/secure your windows. Avoid having your vacant residence on display by shutting your blinds. However, you may not want to completely shut your blinds if you normally don't do so. Instead, close your blinds partially, to block the view while providing an appearance that the house actively occupied. Consider moving expensive items out of plain view.
- ✓ **Alarm Company Notification:** If you utilize an alarm monitoring service with private security response, make notification to the company of your departure/return dates and of any one whom may be checking on your property.
- ✓ **Lawn Care/Snow Removal:** Make arrangements to have your grass cut or snow removed as an overgrown yard or snow covered walk/driveway may alert an offender to a vacant residence.
- ✓ **Neighborhood Watch:** Notify a "trusted" neighbor of your travel plans and emergency contact information. Your neighbors are typically in the best position to identify and report suspicious activity to the police.
- ✓ **Spare Key Consideration:** If you deploy a spare key about your property, know that offenders are pretty good at hide & seek. Consider alternatives to the "hidden key".
- ✓ **Social Media:** DO NOT announce that you are going on vacation to the world! Depending upon your social media settings, think about refraining from posting updates/pictures until you return.
- ✓ **Surveillance Systems:** Consider keeping your own eye on your house while you're gone. "Do It Yourself" surveillance systems have become affordable and easier to install for residential application. Some applications also allow you to monitor other home systems such as sump pumps, chest freezers, smoke detectors, thermostat activity, etc.
- ✓ **Smoke Detectors:** Ensure proper operation of smoke detection and fire suppression systems.
- ✓ **Credit Card(s):** Notify your credit card company(s) of your travel plans to avoid unnecessary fraud protocols being implemented which suspend your ability to use the credit card.
- ✓ **Plumbing:** Unless you have a sprinkler system or other need, turn off water at the main shut-off valve. Your dishwasher, washing machine, water heater and sinks do not need water while you're gone, and a leak while you're away can result in costly repairs for water damage.
- ✓ **Thermostat:** Don't completely turn off your system. If you're going away when it's warm, set you're A/C to approximately 10 degrees below the outside temperature so big appliances don't have to work extra hard. If traveling in the winter, do not set your thermostat much below 55-60 degrees to prevent frozen pipes.
- ✓ **Water heater:** Set your water heater to vacation mode to save on your energy costs.
- ✓ **Kitchen sink:** Wash out your kitchen sink of food waste to mitigate pests. A garbage disposal can be flushed with a half cup of vinegar and water.
- ✓ **Dishwasher:** Run your dishwasher, you don't want to come home to a smelly surprise.

- ✓ **Refrigerator:** Discard anything that is perishable before you leave, so you can come back to a clean and fresh smelling kitchen. If you will be gone for an extended period of time, consider, emptying and unplugging your refrigerator. Be sure to leave the door open to prevent mildew and mold. You may also use a container of baking soda to absorb odors.
- ✓ **Pantry:** Inspect your pantry to make sure you have discarded any perishables and have opened or unsealed food products.
- ✓ **Unplug appliances:** Doing so will protect your appliances from possible power surges from a summer storm and save on energy consumption.
- ✓ **Empty the trash:** Be sure to take out all the trash to avoid unwanted smell and/or pests upon your return. Ask a neighbor to take your trash receptacles to your pick-up location and then back to the house on garbage day. This will also give an appearance that your house is not vacant.
- ✓ **Water your plants:** Don't forget to water your plants prior to your departure. If you have any fresh cut flowers, be sure to discard them to avoid unwanted odors upon your return. If you will be gone an extended period of time, make arrangements to have someone tend to your plants.
- ✓ **Pay your bills:** Make any upcoming payments so you don't have to worry about doing so on vacation or risk late payment fees and a negative credit report.
- ✓ **Washing Machine:** Make sure your washing machine is empty and dried out to avoid mildew or mold growth.
- ✓ **Toilets:** Consider pouring chlorine in the toilet bowl(s) to prevent bacteria build-up and staining.
- ✓ **Pool:** If applicable, check your pool pump to make sure it runs while you're gone. If you will be gone for an extended period of time, enlist someone to periodically check on the pump. Also, make sure pool access control measures are in place.
- ✓ **Arrange for pets:** This goes without saying; however, if you aren't taking or boarding you pet(s), make sure you effectively communicate with whomever is caring for your pets so they know your itinerary.
- ✓ **Fire Hazards:** Upon your departure, double-check that your stove, iron, Christmas tree lights or any other potential fire hazard is turned off.
- ✓ **Lock up:** Upon your departure, double-check that all of your windows and doors are secure.
- ✓ **Itinerary notification:** Consider informing a trusted person(s) not traveling with you of your itinerary, emergency contact information and where your important documents are located should something unexpected happen to you or your property while you are away.

If you have an external video surveillance cameras on your property, please consider completing the Community Camera Program Survey on our website by following this link: www.newberlin.org The ability to access video information is an extremely useful investigatory tool. Information provided to our department from your camera system will be for official use only! Your information will remain confidential and will not be distributed, except as required by law or court order.

Residential Security Survey

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) adjusts the environmental design of a residence or business by using lighting, landscaping and overall design. These adjustments then make the business or residence undesirable to opportunistic criminals. CPTED has been used to combat crimes that might occur in residences, businesses, parking lots or common areas. This includes assaults, robberies, burglaries and thefts. CPTED has been extremely successful in combating the opportunistic criminal.

The four key concepts of CPTED are:

- 1. Natural Surveillance** – the placement of physical features, activities and people in such a way as to maximize visibility.
- 2. Natural Access Control** – the physical guidance of people coming and going from a space by the placement of entrances, fences, landscaping and lighting.
- 3. Territorial Reinforcement** – the use of physical attributes that express ownership such as fencing, pavement treatments, signage and landscaping.
- 4. Maintenance** – allows for the continued use of a space for its intended purpose. It also serves as an additional expression of ownership.

The following suggestions are made for the purpose of reducing the likelihood of criminal activity. While no guarantee can be stated or implied, the concepts of CPTED have proven themselves internationally. Boxes marked "no" indicate areas where enhancements may be made to improve your home's security. Please refer to the "Burglary Prevention Tips" document linked on the New Berlin Police Department's home page: www.newberlin.org for additional information regarding the below survey or contact our Community Services Section at 262-782-6640.

DOORS

- Exterior doors kept locked Yes___ No___
- Exterior doors of solid core construction Yes___ No___
- Deadbolt lock on exterior doors Yes___ No___
- Deadbolt strike plates with 3" screws Yes___ No___
- Sliding glass doors with proper locks Yes___ No___
- Deadbolt on service door to garage Yes___ No___
- Windows or wide angle door viewer on exterior doors Yes___ No___
- Have locks been re-keyed since moved in Yes___ No___

WINDOWS

- Secured by pins or locks Yes___ No___
- Window A/C secured to window frame Yes___ No___
- Sliding glass windows fitted with lock or rod Yes___ No___
- Basement windows locked and secured Yes___ No___

LIGHTING

- Operational front & rear port lighting Yes___ No___
- Motion or dusk to dawn sensor equipped exterior lighting Yes___ No___
- Interior lights on timer/program Yes___ No___
- Landscape lighting Yes___ No___

LANDSCAPING

- Shrubbery trimmed to below window sill height Yes___ No___
- Shrubbery trimmed away from entrances-street observable Yes___ No___
- Trees trimmed at least 4 feet from ground level Yes___ No___
- Tree branches at least 6 feet away from roof edge Yes___ No___
- Property left outside Yes___ No___
- Yard fenced-good condition, locking gates Yes___ No___

MISCELLANEOUS

- Garage doors secured and locked Yes___ No___
- Exterior & interior garage service doors are solid core Yes___ No___
- All garage service doors have deadbolt locks Yes___ No___
- Garage door windows covered & secured Yes___ No___
- Keys removed from vehicle(s) left in garage Yes___ No___
- Garage door openers removed from vehicles left outside Yes___ No___
- Proper display of house numbers Yes___ No___
- Participate in a formal/informal Neighborhood Watch Yes___ No___
- Does a trusted person check on your house when on vacation Yes___ No___