

## **Vacation / House Watch Program**

The Vacation / House Watch service allows residents to sign-up and have the Police Department keep an “extra watch” on your home while it is vacant for an extended period.

Time and manpower permitting, the police will visually check your home several times during your absence and log all comments. In addition as time permits, an exterior physical security check will be conducted to check doors and windows.

The Police Department cannot guarantee the frequency in which your residence is checked or assume any liability should something happen to your home while you are away. As a result, we encourage you to follow some additional steps before you depart and use the Vacation / House Watch program as an added layer of protection to help provide additional peace of mind while you are away.

Whether on vacation or traveling for business for an extended period, the Washington Police Department suggests that you take time to follow these tips anytime you are going to be away from home for an extended period of time:

- Arrange for a trusted neighbor, friend or relative to watch your house while you are away. Let them know where you are going and how you can be reached in an emergency.
- Don't allow mail, newspapers or deliveries to pile up or remain outside of your home. Arrange to have someone you trust collect these items or ask the post office to hold your mail.
- Arrange to have someone place your garbage and recycling bins at the curb on your normal pickup days and then return them after the pickup has been made.
- Arrange to have someone care for your lawn and clear your sidewalks and driveways during the winter months.
- Keep the trees, plants and shrubbery around your home trimmed to reduce or eliminate shadows and hiding places.
- Have outside lighting set to turn on at dusk and off at dawn. Place your inside lighting on timers that are set to turn on/off at random times during the night.
- Ensure that all of the windows and doors on the outside of your home and garage are locked and secured. Never leave keys under doormats or flowerpots where they could be found and used to gain entry into your home.
- Allow neighbors to use and park in your driveway while you're away. If you plan to leave a vehicle parked in your driveway, have someone move it occasionally.

- If you have a security system, turn it on. Ensure that it is working properly and that the monitoring service has an accurate and up-to-date contact list.
- Notify the Police Department of your plans and submit a Vacation/House Watch form requesting extra patrol of your property while you are away.
- Keep a detailed inventory of your valuable possessions, including a description of the items, serial numbers and value. Make sure the list is updated regularly and kept in a secure place outside of your home.