

WHEN YOU GO ON VACATION

- One of the times your home is most vulnerable is when it is left empty for an extended period of time. Darkened windows, mail or newspapers collecting and closed windows in hotter weather all advertise your absence to a potential burglar.
- The best protection for your apartment during your absence is to have a house sitter. A friend you trust staying at your house can take care of your pets and/or plants in addition to making sure the house is inhabited.
- Have a neighbor check on your apartment while you're away -- turning on lights, radios or TVs and opening and closing curtains will give your apartment the appearance of someone home.
- If you don't have a friend or neighbor to house-sit or check your apartment while you're away -- perhaps even if you do -- you should keep not only lights but a TV or radio on a timer. If you're like me and have your TV on almost all the time you're home [NOTE: I don't watch it, it's just background noise.], the absence of the sound and that glowing light in the windows announces that you're not there.
- Make sure whoever is checking your apartment while you're away knows how to work your alarm system and who to call in case of a problem.
- Unless you have a house sitter, stop your mail and any newspaper or other delivery. Nothing announces an empty apartment better than a stack of newspapers or an overflowing mailbox. Ask a nearby neighbor to pick up any packages delivered while you're gone.
- If you have a garden or plants on your balcony, make sure someone is watering the plants regularly or put the plants where they can't be seen. Plants slowly dying due to lack of water may announce your absence.
- Check your lease. Many landlords require that you notify them if your apartment is going to be left empty for any period of time (this is so they can enter in case of emergency even if they can't reach you). If you've got a house sitter this isn't necessary.