



**T**he festive season involves many positives – good food, catching up with friends and family and exchanging gifts. However, it also means you will probably have to leave your home unattended for long periods. With the ever-increasing number of house break-ins reported, it's easy to get paranoid about who might be 'visiting' your home when you are not there. Taking some cautionary steps before you leave will ensure not just the safety of your residence, but also your peace of mind.

# SAFEGUARD YOUR HOME WHILE AWAY

Roshini Anthony closes in on some ways to ensure your home is safe and sound this holiday season.

## TIP 1

The first thing you need to do is to get to know all your neighbours. In this day and age, our busy lives tend to get in the way of good neighbourliness. If you keep an eye on your neighbours' homes while they are away, they will



## TIP 2

Leave a radio

on and install timers to ensure your house is lit up at night. There is nothing more indicative of an empty home than one



## TIP 3

Another important

thing to do is to cancel newspaper subscriptions when you are away, as newspapers lying around are a sure sign that no one is home. It is advisable to get someone to collect your mail for you.

## TIP 4

Securing your home is one of the best ways to keep it burglar-

free. Make sure all doors and windows are locked and that all locks are in good condition. Try to get this done early as the last thing you want as you are leaving is to discover that your window locks are spoilt.



## TIP 5

Leave a spare key with a trusted

neighbour or friend so that he or she can enter your house every few days to ensure all is in order. Give them a call every few days and leave your contact number.



## TIP 6

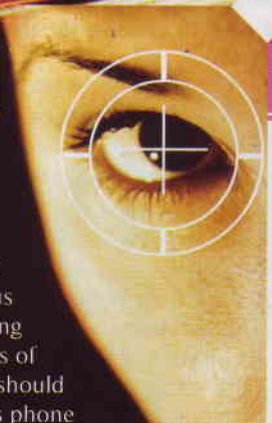
If you wince at the cost of installing a burglar alarm, think again. You will be kicking yourself when you get home from a trip and realise the amount you lost to a burglar. This will burn a bigger hole in your pocket than a security alarm would have cost!



References:  
1. Philippines National Police. Available at [www.pnp.gov.ph](http://www.pnp.gov.ph).  
2. Crimestoppers. Available at [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org).

## TIP 7

Organising a 'Street Watch' or *Rukun Tetangga* will keep neighbours alert to suspicious characters loitering around. Members of a 'Street Watch' should have each other's phone



## TIP 8

If you have large amounts of cash and jewellery, deposit them in the bank.

*Balik kampung* is one of the most exciting parts of the festive season. Don't let the worry about your home prevent you from having a good time.

## TIP 9

Put away all ladders or other objects that might help a burglar gain access to your house. This includes cutting down tree branches that are close to windows and trimming overgrown

