

December 18, 2012

Insurers alert holidaymakers to dangers of social media

The insurance industry is urging holidaymakers to keep their travel plans off social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to reduce the risk of burglary over Christmas.

Insurance Council of Australia Executive Director and CEO Rob Whelan says protecting personal information is an essential part of reducing the risk of burglary and car theft during the end-of-year holidays.

“These days many of us feel comfortable sharing personal information with friends and colleagues, but not everyone using social media has a positive motive,” Mr Whelan says.

“It does not take much homework for a thief to connect information about you and work out when your house might be empty or your car unattended.

“When you put your plans on social media it’s like sticking a note on your front door saying ‘No one is home – help yourself’.

“The Insurance Council recommends that holidaymakers keep their travel plans to a need-to-know basis, and avoid posting holiday pictures to websites and social media until they return.”

Mr Whelan says an empty property is an invitation to burglars, and holidaymakers can take other steps to reduce the risk of burglary and theft over the holidays.

The ICA’s Top 10 Holiday Tips are:

1. Don’t put your travel plans on social media
2. Have a qualified locksmith fit all doors and windows with good-quality locks, especially deadlocks for doors
3. Consider installing security screens over doors and windows to impede burglars, and a back-to-base or monitored alarm
4. Remove any keys you may have left hidden outside the property, such as under mats or pot plants
5. Put all ladders, garden tools and implements away
6. Install motion-sensitive external lighting
7. Take steps to make sure your house looks lived in – the interior should be left tidy, the gardens well maintained

8. Ask neighbours to regularly empty your letterbox, put your bins out and back in, and if you're away for more than a couple of weeks, have someone trim your lawn
9. Trim any trees or bushes that are close to the house to remove hiding places
10. Put any cars in your garage. If you don't have off-street parking, park your car in a highly visible place, preferably under a streetlight, and make sure it has an alarm

Media contact: 02 9253 5161 0432 121 116