

TIPS FOR SNOWBIRD SECURITY

1. Consider filling out the new Betmar Security Darkhouse form. Listing the neighbor who has a spare key and is watching your home. If you do not have a neighbor willing to do this there are services, you can pay for that will monitor your home a couple of times a month. I am not sure what they charge. You should also fill out the Pasco County Dark House Forms.
2. A reliable security system with cameras, motion detectors, and alarms that can deter burglars is essential. Choose a system that allows remote monitoring via your smartphone. Blink, Google, Ring Doorbell and Cameras, these devices will also connect with Amazon Alexa or Hey Google. Plug these devices into surge protected outlets
3. Make sure your internet provider has enough bandwidth to run cameras and other devices in the summer. Spectrum has a snowbird rate that provides enough bandwidth to run camera and other devices. We use Frontier and they do not lower the rate however they often have specials for new customers that are very reasonable. What are some of the other providers that are being used?
4. ADT, Simplisafe, Vector, Vivant and other alarm systems can be installed on doors and windows along with camera's however these packages can be expensive.
5. Display signs indicate that your home is protected by a security system to discourage potential intruders. You can get these on Amazon
6. If you do not plan on having internet and cameras and or security systems installed then you really need to add a security plate to the door if an older unit, fortify windows, add security film, install a security bar on sliding windows and sliding doors secure your windows and doors however you will be exposed to being broke into so please let the our Betmar Security know this. We would also recommend you do these things even if you have video security.
7. Jalousie crank out windows found in many older manufactured homes are easily accessed so you need to follow the following to make these more secure: install security bars or screens over them using heavy-duty locking mechanisms, seal gaps between the slats with weather stripping or sealant and consider replacing them with a more secure window type if possible.
8. Sliding doors and sliding windows should have a metal rod in the track which makes them almost impossible to open. Add deadbolt locks on newer doors if not already installed.
9. Use timers to turn lights on and off, simulating occupancy. Smart plugs can also control other devices like radios or TVs, adding to the illusion. This works if you don't have a car with a cover on it. You can have your neighbors occasionally park their car in your driveway.

10. We do not recommend blocking your driveway as that tells burglars or squatters you are not home. If you have a Florida car you should remove the battery and store the keys in a safe place. If you take the plate off then you need to back it into your carport as a car without a visible plate is not allowed in Florida.
11. Set up online accounts to monitor utility usage, home security, and any smart home devices.
12. Use a secure VPN when accessing your home network remotely. Virtual Private Network, basically encrypts your data.
13. Sunrooms are generally easy for burglars or squatters to get in your house especially if clear vinyl windows which are easy to cut to get in. If this is what you have then do not store any valuables in the room.
14. Arrange for regular lawn maintenance to keep the property looking occupied. Overgrown lawns can signal an empty home.
15. Trim trees and shrubs away from windows and roofs to prevent damage and deter hiding spots for burglars and squatters.
16. Install motion-sensor lights around your property. Well-lit exteriors can deter intruders
17. Store valuable items in a safe or deposit them in a safety deposit box or take them with you when you leave. A locked cabinet could also a good place to keep valuable items. Avoid leaving expensive items in plain view, shut curtains or shades so no one can look into the windows to see what is inside.
18. Forward your mail or put it on hold through the postal service. Stop newspaper deliveries to prevent them from piling up. USPS offers forwarding services directly through their website and Snowbird Services offers mail forwarding for individual items upon request. Consider Informed Delivery, which is a service from USPS. Each day the mail you will be receiving I sent to you in an email.
19. You should check the Official Betmar Website-betmar.org. This will keep you up to date with what is going on at Betmar while you are away.
20. Video the contents of your home, room by room including shed or utility buildings. This can be done on smartphones. Check with your insurance company regarding coverage on your items.
21. Conduct a final walkthrough of your home before leaving. Check that windows and doors are locked, lights and appliances are off, and all preparations are complete.