



## Protect Your Home While You're Away, Suggests Erie Insurance

Erie, Pa. --- June 14, 1999 --- Before you load up the car, van or camper or head for the airport for your much-needed vacation, make sure everything is taken care of at home. With a little advance planning, it will be business as usual when you return.

Most burglaries occur in July and August, and residential break-ins account for two-thirds of all incidents. The standard thief is an opportunist who lives within 10 blocks of your home and knows your schedule.

Making your home appear to have plenty of activity is the best protection against any criminal activity. Since prime vacation months are prime crime months, a little protection can go a long way. Erie Insurance Group offers some basic home protection tips:

- Find a home helper -- a relative, friend or neighbor who can come and go at your house on an unpredictable schedule.
- Arrange for someone to collect your mail, newspapers and other deliveries. While some travelers believe it's best to place a hold on regular deliveries, the interruption of normal daily activities may draw attention to the house.
- Set up timers that will automatically activate lights, televisions and radios.
- Ask your home helper to park a car in your driveway at various hours -- overnight if possible.
- Hide garbage cans in the garage, shed or out of view. If your cans are empty while all the neighbors' cans are overflowing, it can be a signal that residents are away. Similarly, ask neighbors to place a few trash bags in front of your home for refuse collection time.
- If you have a telephone answering machine, don't alter your message to indicate that you're on vacation.
- Be cautious about letting strangers or casual acquaintances know your travel plans.
- Post a "beware of dog" sign or security system decal in your window. Even if you don't have pooch protection or a security system, the appearance of one can be a burglar deterrent.
- Place small valuables in your bank safe deposit box while you're away, and keep valuables at home hidden.
- For added protection, install exterior lights that leave no dark shadows for prowlers to hide outside your home.
- For the ultimate protection, install an electronic home security system. But, buyer beware: some people aren't able to get into the habit of using it, and everyone in the family has to be able to do that.

With nearly 2.5 million policyholders, Erie Insurance Group is the 17<sup>th</sup> largest property/casualty insurance group, and group member Erie Insurance Exchange is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest insurer of private passenger automobiles in the country. Erie Insurance Group includes seven companies operating in 10 states and the District of Columbia. Erie Indemnity Company (NASDAQ - ERIE) is the management company for Erie Insurance Group.