

## Security, safety and Santa – how to survive the silly season

**Auckland, 3 December 2018** – Santa may be welcome in your home, but don't tempt any 'uninvited' guests this Christmas, warns AA Insurance.

According to the 2018 AA Insurance Home and Driver Security Survey, which interviewed 1,100 Kiwis aged 18+ years, 60 per cent of burglaries happened when the household was out for the day or for a short period, such as grocery and gift shopping. Twenty-two per cent of burglaries occurred when respondents were on holiday or away for the weekend and, worryingly, 17 per cent occurred while they were home. It was also discovered that only half (54 per cent) of those with an alarm always used it.

"It sounds obvious but it's important to always lock your home and turn on the security alarm when you leave, even if you're not going for long – because they only work if you use them," says Amelia Macandrew, Customer Relations Manager. "If you haven't already, install deadbolts and locks to your doors and windows, so even if burglars can get in, they will be limited in how much they can take."

During the warmer weather we also tend to leave the front door open to air the house, says Amelia but this can prove a great temptation to opportunistic thieves. This is especially true when, from the street, they can see valuables near the door, gifts under the tree, or tell-tale packaging on the curb side.

Other tips for keeping your property safe include being home to receive online purchase deliveries, or have them sent to where you will be, such as work. Alternatively, take advantage of the courier companies that let you have your deliveries hidden in a special place, at the neighbours, or at a drop off point that you can collect from later.

"Keep enticing items away from the door step, gate or overstuffed letterbox and out of view – because out of sight is out of mind," says Amelia. "This sentiment can be applied when unloading shopping, including groceries, from your car too."

According to the survey, 88 per cent of us always lock our car, yet four in 10 are still at risk of having possessions stolen because we continue to leave them in our cars – particularly women (42% vs 33% of men) and younger drivers aged 18-34 years (49% vs 30% aged 55 years+). Of the 32 per cent of respondents who had their cars broken into, 79 per cent had their contents stolen, including items like child car seats, keys, alcohol and chewing gum. Items can also go missing from boats, as one customer discovered.

“It’s not unusual for holiday items, as well as shopping and gifts to be stolen at this time of year, which can really put a damper on the Christmas spirit,” says Amelia. “One AA Insurance customer was on a camping holiday over the festive season when his fishing rods worth \$1,800 were stolen from his boat, which was parked-up next to the caravan.”

So, as with your home, keep your valuables hidden if you must leave them in your car, or boat – preferably in the boot or lock box, under the seat, or, better still, take them with you.

“The festive season can be a stressful time, so while we’re always here for our customers when unexpected things go wrong, we’d rather help them prevent these things from happening,” continues Amelia. “That means taking a few simple precautions with your belongings and own security, so you get through the holidays safely and enjoyably.”

## AA Insurance’s 10 top tips for a safer holiday

### Burglaries

1. Gifts under the tree are tempting for thieves so make sure they, and other valuables, can’t be seen from outside the home. Also, be careful when disposing of any tell-tale packaging.
2. Don’t advertise you’re not at home by leaving messages on your answering machine or on social networking sites, or having parcels delivered to an empty house.
3. Let your neighbours know if you’re going to be away, give them your contact phone number, and ask them to clear your mail, put washing on the line, or park in your driveway.
4. Make it difficult for someone to break into your home – lock your shed, put away your tools and wheelie bins, and trim trees and shrubs so there are no places for burglars to hide. Don’t leave a spare house key in obvious places for you, Santa, or thieves to find.
5. Consider security options for your home that complement each other, such as alarms, security lights, and deadlocks on doors and windows. Remember they’ll only work if you use them – even if you aren’t out for long.

### Theft from cars

6. Lock your car, no matter where it's parked and keep your keys with you. Try to park in open, well-lit areas, or an attended, secure parking building.
7. It's preferable that you take shopping and other valuables (e.g. wallet, sunglasses, mobile, iPods) with you. If you wouldn't leave the equivalent amount in cash in your car, then you shouldn't leave your items.
8. If you've shopped 'til you've dropped, and you need to leave items in your car, then keep them in the boot where they can't be seen. Don't have them on display.
9. Remove the GPS cradle and mobile charger.
10. Install additional security to your car such as an alarm, or immobiliser, to help deter thieves.

ENDS

### **About AA Insurance**

AA Insurance is an independently operated, New Zealand-based joint venture between the New Zealand Automobile Association (NZAA) and Vero Insurance New Zealand Limited (VINZL). Since 1994 we have demonstrated trusted expertise in home, contents and car insurance in New Zealand, and in 2018 introduced commercial small business insurance. We underwrite our own policies and sell direct to New Zealanders. Our more than 700 staff look after over 385,000 customers with around 745,000 policies.

We proudly partner with Eden Park, support youth charity Blue Light, and have been consistently recognised by: Reader's Digest Most Trusted Brands (since 2011), IBM Kenexa Best Workplaces Survey (since 2008), Canstar Blue Most Satisfied Customers (2013-2018), and the Colmar Brunton Corporate Reputation Index (since 2015) that recognises New Zealand's most successful companies.

AA Insurance has an A+ (Strong) Insurer Financial Strength Rating given by Standard and Poor's (Australia) Pty Ltd. For further information visit [aainsurance.co.nz](http://aainsurance.co.nz).

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