

Media Release

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Security arrangements over the Christmas period – better safe than sorry

Australia's peak security industry body, the Australian Security Industry Association (ASIAL) is urging Australians to take steps to ensure that their homes and businesses are secure over the upcoming festive season.

ASIAL CEO, Bryan de Caires, says that with a few small actions and a little effort, Australians can be better prepared to prevent opportunistic thefts and any surge of pre Christmas burglaries, break-ins or mishaps.

"Extended absences and the presence of expensive gifts and new items over the Christmas period make security precautions all the more important," says de Caires.

"The security industry, working closely with the police, see a greater range of occurrences of thefts and disruptions due to festive 'distractions' and the prevalence of travel and office closures."

In NSW, for example, statistics from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research Centre show that break-ins are generally steady over the period, with the exception of a 51% increase on New Year's Eve.

In addition to the common sense measures such as leaving lights on timers and ensuring all access points including windows are locked, ASIAL recommends that small businesses that are closing over the festive period consider the following precautions to their premises:

- Alarm your premises to prevent typical break ins and theft;
- Alert your security provider to your anticipated movements over the holiday period, and provide alternate contact details if you intend on being away;
- Do not leave valuables and money in office safes for an extended period of time; remove items from the office premise for safekeeping at a bank or somewhere more secure; and
- Put a hold on mail and parcel deliveries during the period of your absence;

ASIAL also suggests a number of basic preventative measures that can improve security around the home, and tips for Christmas shoppers while on the road.

- Ensure access points are visible from the street. Trim hedges and trees to reduce hiding spots and consider a low front fence;
- Well placed sensor lights are an effective method of deterring intruders as they don't need to be on all the time but are activated by movement. Lighting should be mounted well out of reach of tampering and, if possible, placed on all sides of your home; and

- Christmas shoppers should ensure any presents kept in their cars are stowed away out of sight to minimise temptation.

According to the Australian Institute of Criminology, robbery and burglary costs Australians over \$3 billion each year.

“Common sense must prevail,” says de Caires, “when it comes to securing your home or business. We see far too many instances of spare keys being left under the door mat, or front doors not even being locked when residents are not home.

“Equally, there are more sophisticated ways of minimising your risks, and ensuring you have a licensed security professional protecting your premises can play a big part in that.

A more in depth fact file containing practical tips for securing your home is available on the ASIAL website at www.asial.com.au.

Media Enquiries

Bryan de Caires
ASIAL
(02) 8425 4315

or

Andrea Plawutsky
S2i Communications
(0419) 970 984

About ASIAL

Since 1969, the largest industry body representing the security industry has been the Australian Security Industry Association – ASIAL. With a national membership representing approximately 85% of the security sector, ASIAL has played a key role in driving Australian standards, developing codes of conduct and raising the level of professionalism within the industry. Visit www.asial.com.au for further information.