

It's that time of the year for summer vacations and trips out of town to see friends and family. Is your Columbia County home going to be unoccupied for more than a few days? If so, consider signing up for the **Columbia County Sheriff's Office House Watch Program**. Enrollment in this very popular free program takes just a few minutes.

While you are away from your home, deputies will come by your house (usually twice a day at various times as workloads permit) and physically get out and check doors, windows, and around the property for any signs of tampering. If anything out of the ordinary is detected, you will get a call.

To sign up for the House Watch Program, call Columbia County Sheriff's Dispatch at 706-541-2800, at least 24 hours prior to your trip. You will be asked the following questions:

- Name, address, and contact number
- Date/approximate time of departure and date scheduled to return
- The name of a local contact (in case you cannot be reached)
- Name of Security Company (if applicable) and any pets that will be remaining in the home
- Description of vehicles left behind
- Any existing damage to the residence that might indicate a break-in, such as a cracked window, a missing screen, damage to a door, etc.
- Any lights that will be left on, inside or outside the residence.
- The name of anyone that may be by the residence (to check mail, pick up packages, yard maintenance, take care of pets, etc.)

After this information is obtained, you will be given a four digit security code that is good as long as you live at the address. When you return from your vacation, call in to Dispatch and let them know you have returned.

Once in the House Watch Program, any time you go away, just call in and give the dispatcher your security code. Your house information is already populated in the system and will just be updated with new departure information.

If you have any questions on the Columbia County Sheriff's House Watch Program, please call Dispatch at 706-541-2800.