

Securing Your Investment

Whether you choose to suspend or sustain your business, keeping your investment secure is a must while you are deployed. This means protecting your business, your customers, and yourself. This section will help you ensure your business is secure until you return.

- ◆ **Storing records:** All customer records, accounts, credit card numbers, and other confidential information must be stored in a secure location.
 - ◆ Computerized: If you keep this information online, make sure your computer is protected from viruses and keep the information behind an encrypted password.
 - ◆ On paper: If this information is kept in paper files, make sure the file cabinet is locked, and no one but one person you completely trust has a key to the cabinets, and the cabinets are in a secure location.
- ◆ **Protecting your office:**
 - ◆ Security alarms: Install a good system.
 - ◆ Physical inspections: Have someone you trust do periodic checks on the business. Make sure they have a key and can check inside as well for things such as leaks, infestations, and other problems that could go undetected from the outside.
 - ◆ Local police: Let your local department know that your business will be closed while you are deployed. Having the police perform drive-by checks while you are gone can help keep your business safe at night and other times when its security might be compromised.
- ◆ **Leaving necessary utilities on:** Certainly utilities can certainly be turned off while you are away, but others such as gas or electricity will be necessary to heat your building, run the security alarm, and perform other necessary functions. Make sure you turn off only what you can and leave necessary utilities on.
- ◆ **Keeping your deployment private:** Never broadcast the fact that you are out of the country. Putting a sign on the window, leaving it in your phone message, announcing it in email responses, or letting customers know via your website is just asking for your business to be vandalized or broken into. It is certainly understandable to want to let customers know you are being deployed overseas. To the general public, you can simply say that you have closed your business temporarily for personal reasons.
- ◆ **Safeguarding your finances:** Establish a system of checks and balances to safeguard your business and yourself against embezzlement, fraud, and unauthorized withdrawals from your accounts. If you keep your accounts open, let your bank and credit card companies know that you or someone you designate should be contacted if there is any unauthorized activity on your accounts. Designate someone you trust who will be able to review your accounts on your behalf.