Are You Ready for Summer Vacation?
Simple steps to protect your chapter house in your absence

You’ve worked hard all semester, final exams are approaching, and thoughts of summer are not far behind. In the midst of your end-of-semester studies and celebrations, don’t forget to prepare your home-away-from-home for the summer months.

Your chapter house may have few or no residents during the break, so take the time to secure the property inside and out. You’ll increase the chances that in the fall you and your brothers will return to a house ready to use, untouched by vandals, with its contents intact.

Here is a checklist you can use to help ensure that your house will be in tip-top, ready-for-recruitment condition when you return:

- Conduct room inspections.
- Document any existing damage.
- Schedule repairs and upgrades over the summer.
- Schedule any other routine maintenance and upkeep.
- Replace any cracked windows.
- Secure windows with locks and/or security bars.
- Pull down the window shades and close the drapes or blinds.
- Have the roof inspected for any leaks.
- Collect all house keys; label and organize them for fall.
- Test all smoke alarms.
- Test the security system.
- Make sure fire extinguishers are properly charged.
- Notify your security company of the vacancy dates.
- Provide campus, HC, and security company with emergency contacts.
- Secure expensive items in one locked location.
- Secure irreplaceable chapter memorabilia and Ritual regalia.
- Have A/C and other major equipment serviced.
- Shut off the water if house will be vacant.
- Lower the water heater thermostat.
- Place exterior house lights on automatic timers.
- Unplug major kitchen appliances.
- Unplug and move smaller appliances to a secure location.
- Remove perishable food from the refrigerator and cabinets.
- Clean shelves, drawers, oven, etc. Spoiling food will attract pests.
- Inspect plumbing fixtures for leaks and call a professional if repairs are needed.
- Secure outdoor items that could tempt thieves or vandals.
- Clean gutters to prevent overflows/backups.
- Drain, remove and store garden hoses.
- Arrange for someone to maintain your lawn.
- Forward your mail (www.usps.com).
- Discuss with the HC any other steps to prepare for the summer months.

Following these steps will help ensure that the property will remain safe and secure, and serious damage will be prevented while you are away this summer. Also, it will make the chapter house one you’ll look forward to returning to in the fall.