

How To Protect Your Home

What Can You Do?

To frustrate a burglar, reduce or remove his opportunities. Simple, practical crime prevention techniques, when implemented, are demonstrating overwhelming success at deterring the youthful burglar.

Inspect all points of entry into your home:

Doors:

- All outside doors should be solid core in construction, metal clad. Hollow core doors are easily kicked or battered in.
- All door-frames should be solid in construction and firmly attached to the house structure.
- If any doors have hinges on the outside, they should be replaced with non-removable hinges (available commercially).
- All outside doors should have securely mounted deadbolts or rim locks. A deadbolt lock with a one-inch throw is difficult to pry or jimmy. An intruder can break any glass within 40 inches of the lock, reach in and turn the lock. A double cylinder deadbolt will prevent this. If local laws prohibit double cylinder locks, non-breakable glass should be installed within 40 inches of the lock.
- A wide-angle lens peephole is easy to install and will allow you to see visitors without opening the door. Never rely on a chain lock as a security device!

Sliding Doors

Sliding glass doors need special attention:

- Prevent both panels from being lifted up and out of the tracks. Secure the stationary panel with a screw from the inside into the door and frame. The top track should have small screws protruding down so the door barely clears them.
- When locked, wedge the sliding door with a swinging metal rod (a "Charlie Bar") to prevent entry even if the lock is picked or broken. A less desirable option is to wedge a wooden rod (a broom stick, for example) into the bottom track.

Windows

- Double-hung windows (the most common type) are easy to jimmy open. To prevent entry, drill a downward sloping hole through the top of the bottom sash and into (but not through) the bottom of the top sash. Insert a pin or nail in this hole to prevent the opening of either sash.
- Secure sliding windows in same manner as sliding doors.
- Casement windows usually have secure latches. Make sure that your latches are strong and tight fitting. Locks are available for this type of latch to provide additional security.
- Jalousie and awning type windows are not very secure because individual panes are easy to pry or remove. You may want to install metal grating on the inside of the windows, or consider replacing them entirely with a more secure type.

Remember: A primary consideration is easy exit from all points of entry into your home.

Alarms

If you are considering an alarm system, carefully select the installer to assure that you get adequate protection, but not a system far more costly than you need.

Remember these points:

- Get written cost estimates, compare companies and check their reputations.
- An effective alarm system should protect all points of entry into your home.
- Price is no guarantee of quality. Your local police department may be able to help you determine the best system for your needs.

Outside The Home

Now that you've protected your home, look around the outside. Remember, the burglar is looking for easy opportunity. Protect your protection.

- Trim all trees, bushes and shrubs that offer concealment.
- Install outside lighting to eliminate dark areas around doors and windows.
- Before an extended absence, ask someone to watch your home, collect the mail and papers, and cut the lawn. This will give your home a "lived-in" look.

Is Your Home Safe?

Once you have followed these recommendations, you should feel reasonably secure. No homes are burglar-proof, but you have reduced the opportunity. Your investment of time, energy and resources was well worth it. Every five seconds someone wishes he had practiced crime prevention.

Your Home: As Safe As You Think?

Traditionally, most of us have regarded our home as castle, a refuge and a place safe from the intrusions of crime in the streets. But your home may not be as safe as you think. Residential burglary is a real and present danger. You may not recognize the typical burglar. He's often one of the neighborhood kids, a young male who usually lives within a mile or two of his targets, but not always. He is usually an opportunist, and an amateur, but that doesn't mean he can't find his way into your home.

He selects homes he can enter quickly and quietly, and exit with a minimum risk of detection, and he can find those homes easily:

- In a recent year more than 6.5 million burglaries are estimated to have occurred. This is the equivalent of one out of every 12 households.
- 720 burglaries occurred every hour, one every five seconds.
- One recent national study disclosed that reported losses amount to over 1.5 billion dollars a year, an average of \$526 per burglary.

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