

Public Hazard-Crime: Home Burglary Prevention



Home Security Audit: From the outside of your home, consider how difficult it would be to break in.

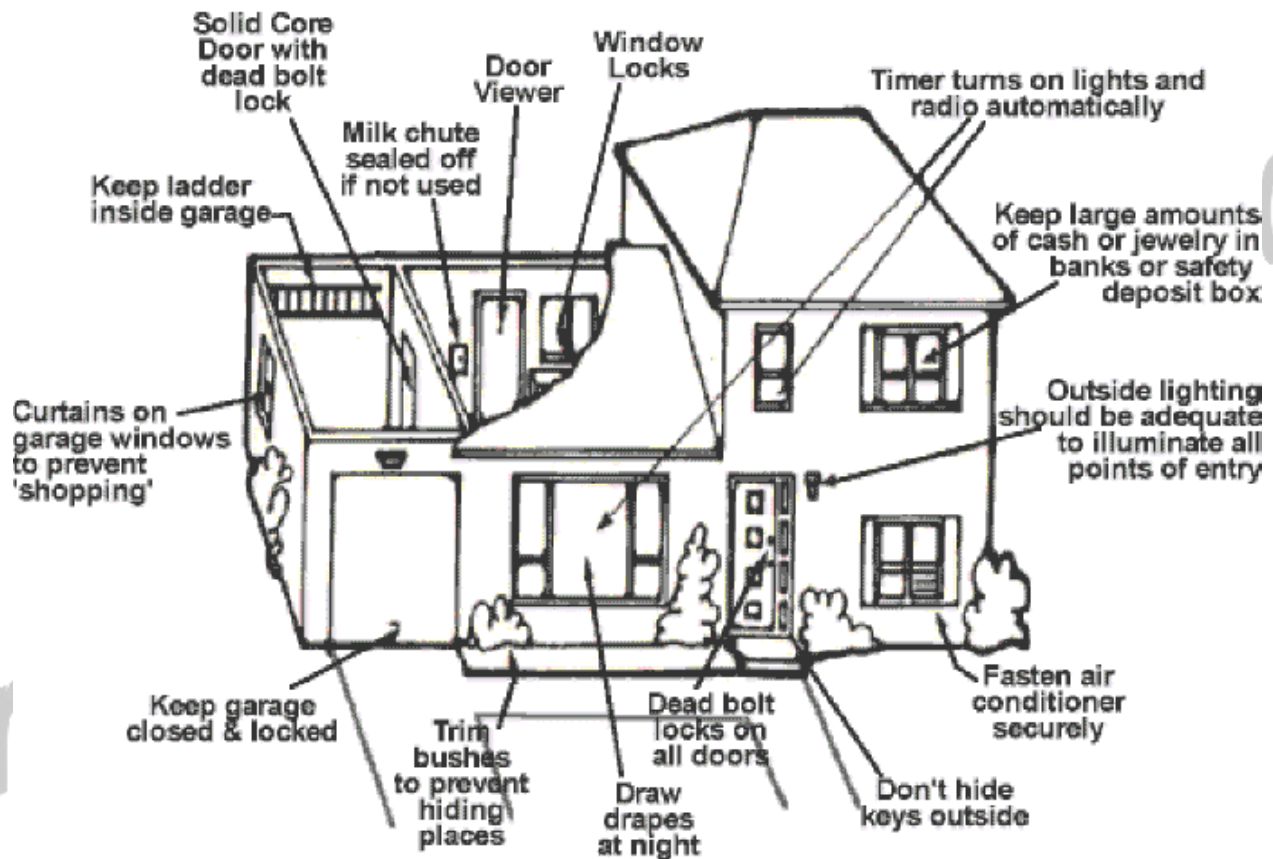
- Is your door metal or solid wood construction?
- Are all doorframes strong enough and tight enough to prevent forcing or spreading?
- Can the lock mechanism be reached through a mail slot, delivery port or pet entrance doorway?
- Can the front entrance be observed from street or public areas?
- Are exterior entrances or front entrance lighted with a minimum 40-watt bulb?
- Do doorways and windows have a screen or storm door with adequate locks?
- Do any upper floor windows open onto areas, such as roofs, that offer special risk of burglary?
- Are exterior areas of doors and windows free from concealing structure or landscaping?
- Is the outside utility entrance to the garage as secure as required for any ground floor entrance?
- Do you leave windows open at night or when you're away?
- Do you leave windows open at night or when you're away?
- Is your garage door left unlocked, even for short periods?
- Your house keys and car keys should not be on the same key ring?
- Do you display valuables to strangers who may have a view into your home through a window?
- Do you talk about vacation plans in public places, such as the beauty shop, shopping mall or car rental office?
- Don't rely too much on your dog. A good guard dog will alert you when an unfamiliar person enters the property. Some professional burglars, however, carry delectable "dog snacks" in their pockets and with a full stomach; some dogs make friends easily and forget guarding the premises.
- Make sure that your home's address is visible for police, firemen and paramedics to easily identify your home but don't post your family name on your mailbox or on your house. A burglar can call directory assistance to get your telephone number and call your home while in front of your house to confirm that you are away.
- Keep all gates in the fence around your house locked at all times. Locked gates (especially tall ones and tall fences) might possibly make it harder for a potential intruder to enter your premises. If any of these precautions are not currently being taken, then there is a good chance that your home's security could be improved.
- Are the house and the grounds visible from the street and by neighbors?
- Is the perimeter of your property marked to discourage trespassers?
- Are entranceways illuminated at night? Are the bulbs for these lights protected?
- Is shrubbery well-located and maintained, allowing unrestricted views of exterior entrances and windows?
- Are entrances and windows free of other obstructions?
- Are exterior doors and frames sturdily built? Could they withstand being kicked, or otherwise broken down?
- Are inner locks inaccessible in the event glass in or near the exterior door is broken?
- Is the door hardware (for example, locks, latches, handles, hinges, strike plates) durable and securely installed? Are hinge pins protected or

located where they can't be removed from the outside?

- Does the front door have a viewer that lets you see who is at the door before you open it?
- Are patio doors “grounded” in their tracks? Is the locking mechanism effective?
- Is the garage door kept locked?
- Are tools and ladders kept where they cannot be accessed by a burglar/thief?

- Are basement and ground-floor windows equipped with adequate locks?
- Are windows of good quality, within solid frames and sashes?
- Are second-storey windows that might be reached (for example, from the garage roof, TV tower, ladder or overhanging tree limb) properly secured?
- If you were away, would the house still look occupied? If yes, what would make you think so?

YOUR HOME IS YOUR CASTLE — PROTECT IT !



DOORS

- Do all of your exterior doors have a good quality deadbolt lock with no less than a 1" throw?
- Are all latch-strike plates on your exterior doors secured with at least 3" screws?
- Do your exterior doors with glass within 3 feet of your lock have double-cylinder deadbolts installed on them?
- Do all your exterior doors without decorative glass have a wide-angle door viewer installed for identifying visitors?
- Are all exterior doors constructed of solid wood?
- Have you changed the locks since moving into your home or apartment?
- Do you ALWAYS lock ALL your doors when you are home for the night or when leaving your residence?

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SLIDING GLASS DOORS

■ Do all your sliding glass doors have at least one of the following: track lock, insertion pin lock, hinged door bar, metal or wooden dowel in track?

■ Do your auxiliary locks prevent the door from being lifted out of its track?

GARAGE DOORS

■ Does your overhead garage door, if equipped with an automatic opener, use a rolling code for signal transfer to defeat "code grabbers"?

■ Does your overhead garage door, if NOT equipped with an automatic opener, have good quality padlocks installed on both sides of the door?

■ Does your exterior man-door and the door from garage into your home have quality deadbolts and are they ALWAYS used?

■ Do you always close your overhead garage door, even when you are home?



WINDOWS

■ Are all your windows secured with an auxiliary keyed, or hex screw window lock?

■ If you do not have keyed or hex screw locks, are your windows additionally secured by pins or nails?

■ Are the keys or hex keys readily available in an emergency?

■ Have your auxiliary window locks been installed to allow ventilation while maintaining security?

EXTERIOR LIGHTING



■ Is your front entrance well-lit to enable you to identify visitors at night?

■ Do floodlights or other type of area illumination cover all exterior sections of your home and property?

■ Do all other exterior entrances have good exterior illumination?

■ Do motion sensors control all your exterior lighting?

LANDSCAPING



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- Are all your bushes, trees and shrubs trimmed to eliminate areas for a person to hide near your doors and windows?
- Have tree limbs been trimmed to prevent access to upper floor windows or balconies?

- Have you planted "prickly" or thorny shrubbery near windows to discourage loitering or hiding?
- Is all outdoor foliage trimmed to prevent obstruction of exterior lighting?



EXTERIOR ENTRIES AND POSSESSIONS

- Are all your gates locked with a quality, weatherproof padlock?
- Are all sheds or outbuildings secured with a quality, weatherproof padlock?
- Are all valuables stored outside (bikes, ladders, lawnmowers, motorcycles, etc.) secured to a fixed, immovable object?

INTERIOR

- Are all interior doors leading to the exterior (for example, basement, garage, solarium) routinely locked?
- Are valuables marked for identification, insured and securely stored? Are valuable items kept in a bank vault or a security box?
- Do you take reasonable security precautions when leaving the house for the day? for a vacation? to go to the corner store?
- Do family members and neighbors know what security precautions you have taken?
- Do family members and neighbors have good security habits so when they may be asked to look after your home, you know your home is secure?
- Do you know your neighbors and their phone numbers?
- Is the phone number for the local police department clearly posted at every telephone?
- Could security be improved by installing a suitable alarm?

POOL SAFETY

- Are all exterior doors leading to your pool area equipped with a specific door alarm that alerts you when someone has exited without using a bypass/reset?
- If your pool area has a secondary fence, is the gate secured with a gate lock or auxiliary padlocks?
- Is your pool area or property line surrounded by at least a 6 foot high fence?
- Is every member of your household trained in CPR?

WHILE YOU ARE AWAY

- Do you have several lights within your home set up on automatic timers?
- Do you have a working home alarm system?
- Do you ALWAYS remember to arm it before you leave each and every time? Are you aware that your alarm system should be armed when you

know you will be in your backyard for any length of time?

- Do you discontinue mail and newspaper service when on vacation or away on business?
- Does your telephone answering machine message avoid identifying that "We're Not Home Right Now"?

FIRE & CARBON MONOXIDE

- Do you have a smoke detector in each of the following areas: in hallway near bedrooms, near family room and kitchen, top of any stairway, in basement, in garage?
- Are there carbon monoxide detectors located in similar areas as smoke detectors with the addition of near your furnace?
- Is there an ABC type fire extinguisher located in your kitchen, garage and basement?
- Do all members of your household know exactly what to do in case of fire or other emergency?

GUN SAFETY

- Are all guns safely stored in a locked box, safe or vault?
- Are all guns stored separately from the ammunition?

- Do you arrange for a friend or neighbor to come by and check on your home when you plan on being away several days or longer?

- Do you test your smoke detectors once a month?
- Do you replace the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors twice a year when we change our clocks (savings & standard time)?
- Do you store all flammables in original, marked containers away from any source of heat or flame?
- Are all your valuable documents and possessions stored in a fire-rated safe?

- Are guns that are intended for home protection equipped with a trigger guard lock?
- Have all members of your household been trained to treat every gun as if it were loaded?

Home Design and Burglary Prevention



- *Two-story, single-family homes*– These homes are usually not a first choice. If the master bedroom (usually his first stop) is on the second floor, a thief could be trapped.
- *Townhouses*– If you live in a townhouse, reinforce your sliding glass doors. Consider using a motion-sensitive light in order to protect the vulnerable rear area of your residence.
- *Apartments*– If you live in an apartment building, the most important security precaution is to change your locks immediately after you move in.

- *Homes in Center of Block*– Homes located in the middle of a block are much more likely to be burglarized than corner homes. If you live in the middle of a block, invest in outdoor lighting that increases your home's visibility and decreases a burglar's chances of success.
- *Cul-de-sacs*– Police drive through these neighborhoods less frequently than others, and cul-de-sacs often have wooded areas nearby, which create an ideal hiding place for an escaping thief. Homeowners on these types of blocks should ask

their local police department for more frequent

police patrols.

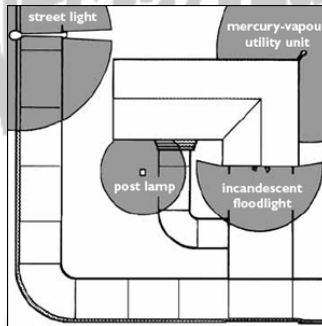
Landscaping



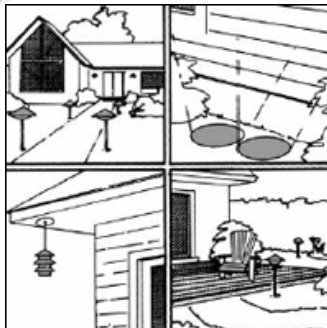
Look around. Are large trees near the house? Prune lower limbs that could help a thief climb in second floor windows. Trim trees and bushes so a burglar cannot use them for cover. High wooden fences also allow a burglar to work unnoticed. Add thorny plants.

Remember to lock up ladders and tools. Ask your neighbors to do the same. Trellises look great, but place them where they cannot be used as ladders to second floor windows.

Lighting



Criminals avoid the spotlight. Porches, yards, and all entrances to your home and garage should be well-lighted. Ask your police or sheriff's department for suggestions about lighting.



Your House Number

Make sure law enforcement or fire agencies can locate your house in an emergency. Your house number should be clearly visible from the street day and night. Use numbers that are 6 inches high and made of reflective materials or black numerals against a white background. Avoid script numbers - they can be confusing. If your house is some distance from the road, post the number at the driveway entrance. If you live on a corner, make sure the number faces the street named in your address.



Neighborhood Security Check

- Does your street have enough streetlights?
- Does your police department post community alerts about burglaries that have occurred in your area?
- Do you continuously hear unusual noise around the neighborhood?
- Do you see continuous repair operations at a non-business location?
- Do you see slow moving cars going up and down your street?
- Do you see parked cars containing one or more unfamiliar faces, especially at an unusual hour?
- Does your neighborhood have a sense of community and pride?
- Do neighbors look out for and care for one another?



If your community doesn't have a **Neighborhood Watch** program, consider establishing one. Also, police departments often have community policing programs and beat meetings to discuss crime problems. Criminals notice when neighbors look out for each other.



Doors - Hinged

Entry doors should be solid core wood (at least 1 3/4 inches thick) or metal. Most hollow core doors can be easily broken through. They offer little protection, no matter what locks you use.

Your door should fit its frame tightly - with no more than a 1/8-inch clearance between the door and frame. If the gap is too large, replace the door. If that is too expensive, bolt a sturdy metal strip to the door edge. You boost your protection and save energy. Any hardware dealer can show you the kind of strip to use.

Doors with decorative glass panels or window are an easy mark. It takes only seconds to break the glass and unlock the door. If you do not want to replace the door, install break-resistant plastic panel or decorative grille over the glass. Attach the grilles with non-removable screws.

Most door hinges are on the inside, safe from a burglar's tools. If hinges are on the outside, the hinge pins can be easily removed and the door taken out of the frame. To protect such doors, replace hinges with new ones with non-removable pins.

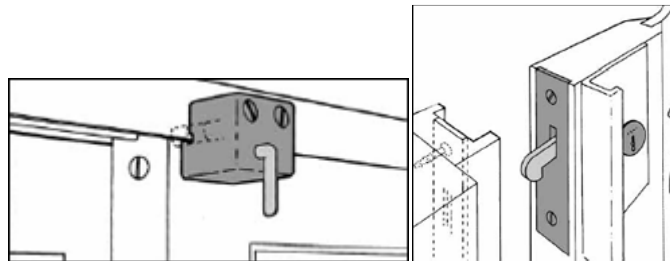
Exterior Door Check



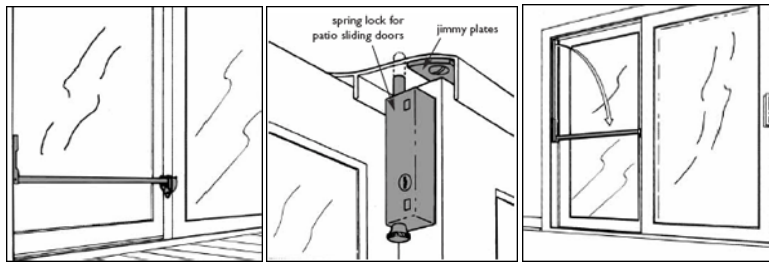
- Avoid leaving gaps around the doorframe, as this provides leverage for removing the door from its frame.
- All exterior hinge doors should be of solid core construction (1" thick if made of wood) or metal clad.
- Locks should be at least 40 inches from door glass, unless the door glass is reinforced. If it's not, a double cylinder deadlock is recommended.
- Only install pet doors that can be surely locked when you are away from your home.
- Try a quality, heavy-duty, deadbolt lock with a one-inch throw bolt.
- Use a heavy-duty, four-screw, strike plate with 3-inch screws to penetrate into a wooden doorframe.
- Use a wide-angle 160° peephole mounted no higher than 58 inches.



Sliding Glass and Garage Door Tips

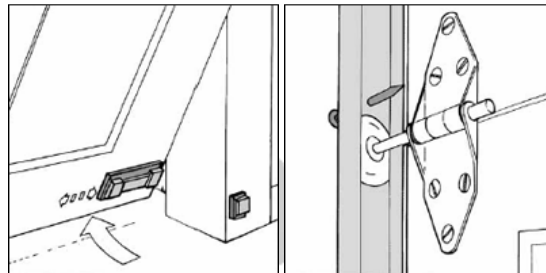


Sliding Glass Doors– Many of these doors can be lifted off their tracks. To prevent lifting, keep the door rollers in good condition and properly adjusted. You can also install anti-lift devices. For maximum security, use vertical bolts. Also place a metal or solid wood rod on the inside track to hold the door closed.



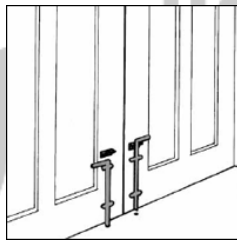
- Adjust rollers so the door cannot be pushed up enough to lift it off the track.
- Insert screws along the upper track of the door. Leave enough room for the door to slide, but not enough space to lift the door out.

- Drill a hole and insert a nail through the inside frame and part way through the metal door frame. You can remove the nail, but a burglar cannot.



Garage Doors– The door that connects your garage to your home should have solid wood or solid-core construction. Secure it with a deadbolt lock. Many burglars are able to pry open a small area of the garage door and pull the string that hangs from the opener to disengage the lock.

- Make garage windows opaque by painting them over or screen them with curtains or blinds.



- Arrive at your garage with your car doors locked. Activate the opener and visually inspect the interior of your garage for intruders from within your locked vehicle before you drive in.

- Close your garage door electronically while remaining in your locked vehicle. Only when the door is fully closed and you are sure that you are alone in the garage should you exit your vehicle and enter your house.



Windows



■ **Ground level window**– Use the same security measures on your windows as you would on your doors. Screens on windows do not guarantee the security of the window. While they may slow a burglar’s progress, they are easily cut or removed.

■ **Fixed windows** (picture windows, vision panels, skylights)- do not open. They provide good security. Thieves may cut a hole large enough to gain entry or break the glass, but doing so creates a high risk of injury and detection. Most thieves will not break a large picture window unless they are assured of a substantial reward and quick escape.

■ **Vertical sliding (single or double-hung) windows**- are widely used. Their biggest drawback is the crescent lock with which most such windows are fitted. The lock can be opened from outside with a knife slipped between the inner and outer sash. Its fasteners, like those of most window locks, are apt to pull free of the wood when force is applied at the sash. Equipped with a better lock, this type of window provides good security.

■ **Double-hung window**– for these windows that slide up and down, center locks on the corners or mounted on the sides will allow you to secure windows in a partially open position.

■ **Casement windows**– Casement windows are hinged on one side and open out like a door, using a crank or lever. Replace the handle catches with keyed locking handles and remove the crank when it is not in use. Keep the key away from the

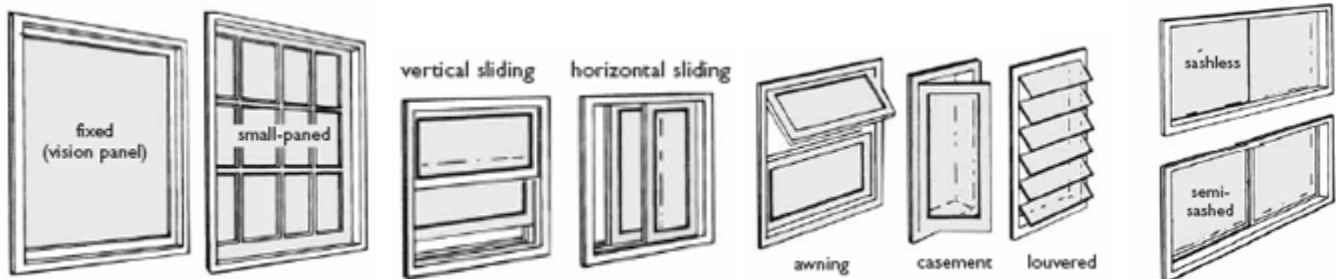
window, but make sure that it’s easily accessible in case of an emergency. Note: for persons with disabilities, casement windows are ideal. Ensure there is only one lever lock on the lower part of the window for easy access or install hardware that is available to close the top and bottom levers from one location. Closing only the bottom lever on a window with a top and bottom lever can result in a drafty window or an insecure window that can be pried open.

■ **Louvered windows**– windows that open outward like awnings can be very difficult to secure. Consider replacing them with safer double-hung windows.

■ **Awning windows**- are hinged at the top or bottom. They offer good security if equipped with a strong lock.

■ **Horizontal sliding windows**- slide inside a track, similar to patio doors. Security can be good to poor, depending on the design and manufacture. Many of the older, metal-sashed windows could be lifted out of their tracks from outside, but this problem has been overcome on more recent models.

■ **Burglar bars**– these offer another way to keep thieves out. Attached to windows, they make it almost impossible to enter your home. But remember that this works both ways; bars can keep you inside when you need to get out. Consequently, keep the key near the bars.



Emergency Escape Considerations: It is extremely important to keep in mind that, in the event of a fire, windows would likely be used as an emergency escape route and an entry point for rescue workers. Security should not interfere with entry or exit purposes, particularly if the room is used for sleeping.

■ Air conditioners mounted in a window frame should be bolted through the wall finish to studs to prevent their removal. Immobilize the upper window by blocking the channel with a piece of wood or pinning the sashes as described above. Fans or vents in the wall or roof that require an opening bigger than 650 cm² (100 sq. in.) should be secured the same way.

■ Close curtains after dark so burglars won't know what to expect if they break in.

■ Close and lock all possible entry point windows when you leave the house. Install skylights so that they cannot be opened or easily removed from the outside.

■ Block horizontal sliding windows with a length of wood laid into the lower track or with pins at the top and bottom, in the same way that double-hung are pinned. A small wooden wedge inserted between the sash and channel of a vertically sliding window is also effective.

■ To prevent a horizontal sliding window from being lifted out of its track, screw several large panhead screws into the upper track just far

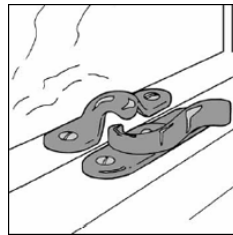
enough that the top of the sash grazes the screw heads without jamming. This eliminates the slack above the sash. To remove the window for cleaning, the screws can be taken out and put back

■ On hinged windows, use strong hinges and good quality fasteners. Replace short fasteners with longer ones that reach well into the wood of the frame and sash. Ensure that exposed hinge pins and fasteners cannot be removed.

■ Replace worn-out window putty on wood windows. Add extra glazing points (the sharp metal pieces that hold the glazing in place) for greater strength. Reinforce wood moulding with extra-long finishing nails.

■ Pin double-hung windows. With the window closed, drill small holes through the top corners of the lower sash part way into the outer sash on a slight downward slant. Be careful not to drill completely through the outer sash or to damage the thermal seal. Insert a nail or bolt in the holes to prevent the window from being raised. Additional holes can be drilled that will allow the window to be locked while slightly open for ventilation.

You can buy special key locks for windows at a hardware store. Ask for locks best suited to your type of windows, and get the installation instructions. Keep the keys away from the windows, but make sure everyone in the house knows where to find them in case of an emergency. Be sure to check with your local law enforcement agency or housing officials to see if they restrict installation of these locks.



An easy, inexpensive way to secure double hung windows is to use a nail. Drill an angled hole through the top frame of the lower window partially into the frame of the upper window. Then insert a nail or an eyebolt. The window cannot be opened until you remove the nail. Make a second set of holes with windows partly open so you can have ventilation without inviting intruders.

For sliding windows, try the preventive tips suggested for sliding doors, inside.



Locks

Deadbolt Locks - A deadbolt lock can provide good protection. When you turn the key, the lock mechanism slides a strong metal bolt from the door into the frame.

When you buy a deadbolt lock, make sure:

- The bolt extends at least 1 inch from the edge of the door (has a 1-inch throw).
- The connecting screws that hold the lock together are on the inside of the door.
- The cylinder has a steel guard - a ring around the key selection. The cylinder guard should be tapered or rotate around the key to prevent wrenching if twisted.
- The strike plate is attached to the door frame with screws that measure at least 3 inches.

Double Cylinder Deadbolt Locks - To improve security on a door with glass panels, use a double cylinder dead bolt lock. These locks can be opened only with a key from either side. Keep the key near the door, but not reachable from the glass panel. That way intruders cannot get in, but you and your family can get out quickly in case of fire or other emergency. Check with your local law enforcement agency or housing officials before you install this lock. Some communities restrict its use.

Padlocks - Padlocks are typically used for garages, sheds, and workshops. Look for a sturdy padlock that does not release the key until the padlock is locked. Be sure the padlock is case-hardened with a 3/8-inch shackle so it can resist bolt cutters. A double locking design can prevent the shackle being pried away from its case. Remember that a padlock is only as good as the hasp on which is mounted. The hasp should be secured with bolts that are concealed when the padlock is locked.

Remember, always use your locks. Even a five minute trip to the store is long enough for a burglar to enter your home.

- Single cylinder locks are equipped with knobs or levers on the inside of the door on which they're mounted. They allow people on the inside of a home to quickly unlock and exit the structure, if an emergency arises.
- Double cylinder deadbolt locks require a key from both sides of a door. Both models, however, require a key from outside a house.
- Pick-resistant locks are designed to resist lock picks and raking tools, which are common tools used by professional burglars.
- Padlocks are good choices for sheds, workshops and garages.
- For keys, never use ID tags and do not hide them outside your home. A burglar might locate the keys and unlock an outside door to your home.
- Prevent your doors from being kicked in by using U-shaped metal pieces that fit around the lock edge of a door.

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Keys - Victims report that as many as half of all burglaries take place without forced entry. In many cases, the burglar used a key. Be sure your keys do not fall into the wrong hands.

- Never carry identification tags on your key ring or holder
- When you move into a new home, have the locks rekeyed or changed. A locksmith can do this or, if you are handy with tools, you can change the lock yourself.
- Know who has every key to your home. Do not give keys to maintenance or delivery people.
- Do not hide your key outside. Burglars know all the hiding places.
- All the hardware in the world will not protect you if you open your door without checking who is on the other side. Buy an inexpensive viewer. Tell your children and their babysitters not to open the door to strangers.

Possessions – Physical Inventory

Before a burglary or catastrophe strikes and you're faced with a loss, make a home inventory - lists, pictures or a videotape of the contents of your home. After all, would you be able to remember all the possessions you've accumulated over the years if they were destroyed by a fire? Having an up-to-date home inventory will help you get your insurance claim settled faster, verify losses for your income tax return and help you purchase the correct amount of insurance.



- Several methods can be utilized when developing a room-by-room household inventory, including audio recording, videotaping, photographing, slides and/or a written inventory. Start at one point and go around the room. Don't forget to open closet doors and drawers, and check the attic, basement, garage, and automobile trunks.
- Engrave your initials on valuables. Thieves find it harder to sell marked merchandise. You can

borrow an engraving pen free of charge from many police departments.

- Have family members pose with valuables and store the photos in a safety deposit box.
- Do not leave empty boxes on the curb. When you make large purchases, break them down and place them on the bottom of your trash pile on the day of pickup.

- Take an inventory of your possessions, including the item, make, model, color, size, style, features, unique characteristics and serial number.
- All items should be photographed or video taped, and the receipt filed with your log. Attach photographs and appraisals for all items unable to be engraved (i.e., jewelry).
- Make two copies of your inventory, keeping one copy in your home and another in a safe location outside of the home.

- Use security stickers. Place stickers on your home that says your home is protected by an alarm.
- Do not put valuables in an obvious spot. Keep inexpensive jewelry in the jewelry box on your dresser and put your irreplaceable pearls in a plain paper box. A thief might take the obvious jewelry box and overlook the real one.
- Do not keep your car keys next to the garage. A burglar may use your car to load all of your possessions and escape from the area.

Possessions you may want to consider marking:

Bicycles
Binoculars
Cameras
Car phones
Car tape decks
Computers/ Printers
DVDs
Fishing rods, reels

Golf clubs
Guns
Lawn mowers
Mag wheels
Microwaves
Musical instruments
Outboard motors
Radios

Stereo equipment
Tape recorders
Tools (hand/power)
Televisions
Vacuum cleaners
VCRs
Watches

Vacation Burglary Prevention



- Vacations provide burglars with plenty of time to enter your home, remove large items and search leisurely for hidden valuables.
- If you are planning a vacation, take the following precautions to protect your home while you are away.
- Ask police to check your home and patrol your neighborhood more closely while you are away.
- Stop mail and newspaper deliveries, or have a trusted neighbor collect them while you are away so that they do not accumulate.
- Secure all doors, windows, pet entrances and garage doors.
- Transfer valuables to a safety deposit box.
- Place timers on indoor lamps to illuminate your home at night, and set timers to turn on radios and televisions randomly during the day.

- Check that no bulbs are burned out on your indoor lamps, outdoor lighting fixtures or low voltage lighting system.
- Arrange to have your landscaping continue, or your driveways and walks shoveled. A snow-covered driveway without tire tracks or an overgrown yard is an immediate indicator to burglars that nobody is home.
- Keep some shades and blinds up and curtains open to maintain a normal appearance.
- Have one trusted friend check your home, inside and out, each day.
- Remove messages from your telephone answering machine daily so that the “beep” is always short. And don’t indicate on your message that you are on vacation.

■ Park a car half-way down your driveway to create the illusion that somebody is home as well

as inhibit a burglar to use your driveway as a way to better access your property.

■ Hide garbage cans in the garage or apartment.



In Case of a Burglary

■ If you return home and find your door or window ajar, go to a neighbor's home and call the police. Do not go in to investigate.

■ In the event of a surprise encounter with an intruder, attempt to flee. If you are blocked in, remain still and allow him to leave. Have a cordless phone to take with you for hiding. Do not attempt to detain them, as he or she may be armed. **Your television is replaceable but you're not!**

■ While you wait for the police to arrive, don't touch anything or attempt to clean up the mess. You may ruin important evidence or fingerprints.

■ Notify the police if you find anything that is not yours that may have been left behind by the burglar such as tools, clothing, etc.

■ When the police arrive, provide them with a copy of your inventory, and a complete description of all missing property. Tell the police if you have engraved any of the items with your initials.

■ After the police have determined a point of entry, quickly repair any damage, and take proper measures to boost your security. Many thieves break into the same home a second time.

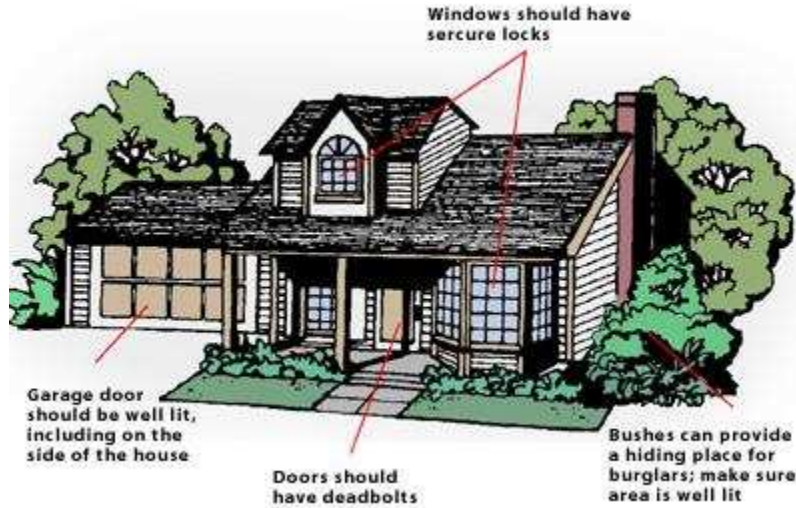


Top Burglary Prevention Tips

1. Keep all doors, windows, pet entrances and garage doors closed and securely fastened. Doors should have deadbolt locks with at least a 1" throw and reinforced strike plate with 3" screws. All windows should have window locks.
2. Secure sliding glass doors. Place a metal rod or piece of plywood in the track and install vertical bolts.
3. When service or delivery people come to your door, ask for ID. If you're still not sure, call the police first and report the stranger. Call the company to confirm.
4. Cut up cartons for TVs, computers, stereos, etc. Tie the pieces together so a burglar going through the garbage does not see any of your highly valuable household items.
5. Do not leave ladders or tools lying around outside. They can assist a possible intruder.
6. Install a wide-angle door viewer (peephole) in your front door so you can see who is at the door.
7. Organize a neighborhood watch program. Neighbors working together make one of the best crime-fighting teams around.
8. Make a home inventory list, complete with photos or video.

Public Hazard–Crime: Burglary Prevention - Continued

9. Store this list in a safety deposit box.
10. Have a security plan in place and talk about it with your family and neighbors.
11. Write down the emergency telephone numbers of the local police and county sheriff's office and the numbers of several nearby neighbors. Keep the numbers by your telephone(s).
12. Don't put your name and residential address on your key ring. If you happen to lose it, a dishonest person could gain entry to your home.
13. Install and test a burglar alarm system.
14. Post signs in conspicuous locations that clearly indicate that the premises are protected by a burglar alarm.



Security Alarms



If you desire additional security, you might consider a burglar alarm system. Be sure you deal with a reputable firm that provides approved systems.

An alarm system is not a substitute for good physical security. In most situations, exterior lighting, sturdy doors and windows and quality locks provide better and more cost effective protection against burglars. If you live in an “average” neighborhood where your home is much like those around it, if your house has well-secured doors and windows and you take basic security precautions, you probably don’t need an alarm.

A carefully selected and properly installed burglar alarm can be a worthwhile investment in security. But not everybody needs one.

No security system is perfect 100% of the time - and - it must be utilized to be even remotely effective.

The two most common mistakes with home alarm systems are:

- Failure to activate the alarm
- Placing the alarm control on the door knob side rather than the hinged side of the door

A burglar alarm might be a good choice if:

- You live in a remote location or where normal surveillance by neighbours is impossible.
- You have valuable or irreplaceable possessions.
- You spend prolonged periods away from home on business trips, at the cottage and so on.
- You want the additional peace of mind an alarm system can provide.

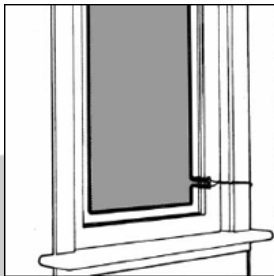
Types of Alarms



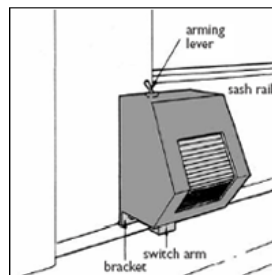
There are two types of alarms: those designed to protect doors and windows (perimeter alarms) and those that protect interior spaces (area alarms).

A perimeter alarm system provides protection through a network of sensors on doors and windows. A "sensor" can be a magnetic contact, strip of foil tape or a vibration detector that triggers an alarm when a door or window is opened or broken.

Gaining in popularity are small, plastic, disc-shaped sensors that stick in the corner of a window. They sense the sound waves transmitted when the glass breaks.

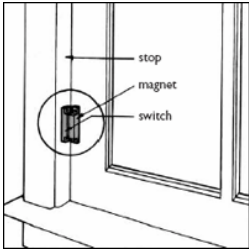


A type of perimeter alarm will activate when the window is broken. When that happens, the foil tape tears, which breaks a circuit and sounds an alarm



A battery-operated window alarm

Should a burglar attempt to gain access by prying open a door or window or by smashing the glass, the alarm will be activated before the burglar can enter the home. This type of system allows residents to move freely throughout their home while ensuring a high level of protection.



Magnetic sensors are commonly used in perimeter alarm systems

Motion detectors can effectively be used in conjunction with this type of system. They act as secondary measures to ensure maximum protection when the house is empty.

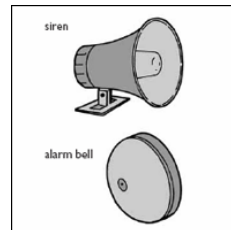
An area alarm system relies on sophisticated electronic sensors to “sweep” a portion of a room or hallway. Sensors come in many forms with varying functions. They are all designed to respond to either changes in light, pressure, temperature, sound or movement.

- Photoelectric “eyes” trigger an alarm when a light beam is interrupted.
- Ultrasonic devices fill a room with inaudible sound waves when the sensor detects changes in the wave pattern caused when an object enters the area.
- Infrared detectors are sensitive to body heat.
- Microwave devices use high-frequency radio waves to detect motion.
- Sound sensors react to noises commonly made during a break-in.
- Proximity detectors, which sound an alarm when approached, are used to protect specific objects, such as wall safes or paintings.

In both perimeter and area alarm systems, sensors are connected, either by wires or miniature radio transmitters, to a central control panel. Wireless systems are easier to install, but replacing the batteries that power the transmitters can be time-consuming and costly. Wireless systems are also harder to test for correct operation.

Reporting Systems

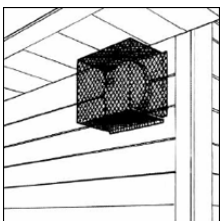
Detecting an intruder is just one function of an alarm. Making sure someone knows about it is the other part. A reporting system can be a bell, siren or horn located on the premises (local alarm), or a telephone hookup to a central monitoring station (“silent” alarm) or both.



A local alarm may sound a siren or a bell

To be effective, a local alarm must be loud enough to frighten the intruder and to be heard by occupants and neighbors. Underwriter’s Laboratories recommends a minimum of 105 decibels. Check local bylaws, which may restrict the loudness of such equipment. There is usually a delay — from 15 to 30 seconds — between the time the alarm is activated and the time the alarm sounds.

For extra protection, the alarm should also trigger the outside house and yard lighting, drawing visual attention to your home from neighbors and police.



Mount alarm well out of reach and provide protection from tampering

Noise-making devices should be mounted well out of reach, both inside and outside the home. They should also be housed in a steel, tamper-proof box. The alarm system should have its own protected power supply so that it functions even when power to the home is cut, accidentally or otherwise.

Carefully consider how you will respond to the alarm when it sounds. If you are at home, you might choose to investigate the disturbance yourself. If so, you risk confronting the intruder and creating a potentially dangerous situation. The best policy is to call the police from the safety of your bedroom.

When you are away, never assume that your clanging alarm will be investigated. Most people are so used to hearing sirens and horns that they will ignore them, assume that something is already being done or just pass by because they don't want to get involved.

If you install an alarm:

- Tell your neighbors that you have an alarm and demonstrate what it sounds like.
- Obtain their agreement to phone your home if they hear the alarm to verify that the emergency is real. Tell them to call the police if there is no answer, or if the answer they receive suggests that something is amiss. It is better for the police to receive calls from several neighbors than none at all because everybody assumes that someone else has made the call.
- Consider giving your most trustworthy neighbor a key to your home. This person could accompany the police on their investigation, turn off the alarm (if it does not shut off automatically), and take charge of your home until you return.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing, who have a burglar alarm, require some method of modification when an alarm is set off. Technology exists which notifies people who are deaf or hard of hearing with flashing alarms or a vibration device under the pillow or mattress.

Some systems include an automatic dialing device. When the alarm sounds, the device automatically dials one or more phone numbers until help is summoned. These are especially useful in remote locations where a noise-maker is unlikely to be heard. Because of the frequency of false alarms, dialers should not be programmed to call the police directly. Program them to call a neighbor, relative or friend who will in turn call the police after verifying that the emergency is real.

A "silent" alarm reports an intrusion to a central monitoring station through a secured telephone line or radio transmitter. The effectiveness of the system depends on the speed and reliability of the response. If the responding agency is located across town and it takes an investigator 20 minutes to arrive at your home, this system is of limited value.

Some systems provide both a local and silent alarm.

False Alarms

False alarms are the single biggest drawback of an alarm system. They can be caused by defective equipment, improper use, faulty installation or poor adjustment. Some alarms can be triggered by a passing truck, household pets, the draft from a hot air register or fan, or changes in temperature or humidity. Others can be set off by an interruption in the power supply, a ringing doorbell or phone, or the neighbour's burglar alarm. If you forget to turn the system off before entering your home, you could trigger the alarm yourself. There are as many ways for an alarm to malfunction as there are different alarms.

Every false alarm diminishes the system's credibility. Neighbors soon become indifferent, and even police and private security agencies can become less than enthusiastic in their response. Before you decide to purchase an alarm, check with your municipality or police department about the repercussions of false alarms. In some cities, the incidence of false alarms approaches 98 per cent. Police forces have been known to impose fines on homeowners and permanently suspend service to homes with a history of false alarms.

To keep false alarms to a minimum:

- buy only good-quality equipment;
- have it installed by someone who knows how to install it; and

- use it only in ways for which it was intended.

Ensure that everyone in your household knows how the alarm functions and how it is to be used.

Choosing an Alarm System

Once you have decided that an alarm system is what you need, you must then decide which type of alarm is right for you.

Remember that a perimeter alarm acts like an early warning system, detecting an intruder who is still outside your home.

One major drawback of the area alarm is that it will alert you only after the intruder has broken in. In fact, unless you have a sensing device in every room and hallway, the intruder may spend considerable time in your home before actually setting off an alarm.

On the other hand, because of their greater sensitivity, area protectors are generally more difficult to bypass or disable. The most versatile alarm systems use motion and heat detectors in key locations to enhance a good perimeter alarm.

There is no perfect alarm system and certainly none that is right for every situation. The alarm you choose should be tailored to your specific security needs, your lifestyle and the design characteristics of your home.

Some contact-type window alarms, for example, cannot be installed in older homes where window frames have warped with age. Area alarms are not suitable if they might be triggered by a pet or by a child who gets up in the night to use the bathroom. However, most systems allow for the area alarm system to be bypassed at night with the perimeter alarm remaining active.

The quality of the equipment and its installation should outweigh initial purchase price as a factor in determining which system to buy.

Buy from a dealer or agency with a verifiable record of quality installations, and one that will maintain and guarantee the equipment it sells. The Better Business Bureau, your local Chamber of Commerce, provincial licensing authorities, reputable locksmiths and people you know who have alarm systems are good sources of information about the security companies in your area.

Alarm systems can cost from less than \$50 to several thousand dollars. The old adage “buyer beware” holds — you get what you pay for. The cost of batteries, maintenance and monitoring services can also be substantial. Consider only what you can afford to buy as opposed to what you want to buy. If you are like most people, you will no doubt have to compromise.

Before you buy, take the time to find out what the different alarm systems can and cannot do. Every system has its strengths and weaknesses. For example, area protectors are more expensive than perimeter devices, but they are much easier to install. Some need only be plugged in. However, area protectors must be carefully adjusted and aligned to ensure correct functioning and to prevent false alarms.

Ask about what features are built into the system to guard against wire cutting and false alarms and to ensure the system works in a power outage.

Here are some useful features to look for:

- exit and entry delay;
- ease of installation, adjustment and testing;
- tamper-proof control unit, noise-makers, key switch (or push-button pad) and wiring;
- manual override that lets you abort a false alarm before it sounds,
- automatic shut-off and reset;
- battery backup;
- low-battery warning;
- comprehensive instructions on use, installation and maintenance; and
- written guarantee on parts and labor.