

Burglary Prevention Tips

Outside your home

Trim shrubs so windows and doors are in full view from the street. Unobstructed doors and windows are a deterrent because the intruder is forced to work in the open where detection is likely. Maintain adequate lighting, especially at vulnerable entry points. Some power companies will install a yard light for a reasonable monthly charge. Always keep garage doors locked. This prevents burglars from entering your home through the hinged door leading from the attached garage to the house. House numbers should be prominently displayed and well lighted. This helps police and other emergency vehicles find your home when necessary. Urge your neighbors to display their house numbers. This will be very useful when calling to report a burglary or fire at their home.

Your doors

Exterior doors All exterior doors should be metal clad or solid hardwood. Doors of this type resist forced entry because they are not easily battered or bored. Install a 180 degree wide-angle viewer in exterior door to see who is at the door before opening it. These viewers are available from locksmiths and hardware stores.

Sliding glass doors

Place a length of wood in the lower track. Make sure it fits snug and cannot be popped out of the track by an intruder. Buy a metal bar, or Charley bar, that attaches to the side frame and folds down across the glass, bracing itself against the opposite frame. Charley bars are available from locksmiths. It is easy for a burglar to pry a sliding glass door from its track. To prevent this, install three, one and one-fourth inch large head sheet metal screws in the upper track of the movable door. Make sure they protrude far enough so the sliding frame just clears.

Your locks

The **key-in-knob or spring lock** is used most often in dwellings. Its spring-activated strike has a beveled edge and can be easily defeated when a credit card or screwdriver is wedged between it and the strike plate. This lock offers little security.

The **dead latch** is similar to the spring latch but has a bar on the strike that cannot be easily defeated. It offers little security because the bar is very short and weak. Both lock types should be supplemented by deadbolt locks or rim type locks.

The **deadbolt lock** has a bolt that must be activated by a key or thumb turn. It offers good security because it is not spring activated and cannot be opened by a credit card. For this reason it is best to install deadbolt locks on solid hardwood exterior doors. Either of these two types of deadbolt locks should be installed.

The **single cylinder deadbolt** is activated with a key on the exterior side of the door and a thumb turn piece on the other side. Install this lock where there is no breakable glass within 40 inches of the thumb turn piece.

The **double cylinder deadbolt** is key activated on both sides of the door. It should be installed where there is glass within 40 inches of the lock. The double cylinder lock can hinder escape from a burning home. So always leave a key in or near the lock when someone is home. Children should know the location of this key and how to operate the lock. When no one is home, keep the key out of the reach of any burglar who might break the glass near the lock. Double cylinder deadbolt locks are only permitted in existing single-family homes, townhouses and first floor duplexes used exclusively as residential dwellings.

Recommended features of the deadbolt lock The bolt must extend a minimum of one inch and be made of case hardened steel or contain a hardened insert. The cylinder guard must be tapered, round and free spinning to make it difficult to grip with a pliers or wrench. It must be solid metal-not hollow casting or stamped metal. A heavy duty strike plate installed in place of a regular strike plate helps strengthen door frames. The heavy duty plate uses four to six, three-inch wood screws, not two, three fourths inch screws used in regular plates. These longer screws go through the frame into the jamb making it harder for someone to split the frame when kicking the door.

Your windows

Double hung windows are easily jimmied or pried open. They can be secured by taking these simple, inexpensive precautions: Keyed locks offering effective protection are available for windows. These inexpensive, easy-to-install locks should replace thumb turn locks that offer little security.

Master key all window locks and show children how to use them. Do not use keyed locks on windows in sleeping areas. Sliding glass windows are secured the same way as sliding glass doors. See section on doors.

While away from home

During vacations or other trips, follow these tips to make your home appear occupied. They will discourage burglaries.

Ask a trusted neighbor to:

Park in your driveway or in front of your home.

Occasionally place garbage in your garbage can.

Mow the lawn or shovel sidewalks.

Check your home for anything unusual.

Pick up your mail and newspapers. Never tell the newspaper carrier that you will be gone. Cancel the paper rather than entering a "vacation stop".

Either use automatic timers or recruit a trusted neighbor to turn lights on at dusk and off at your bedtime. Vary the lights to be turned on and occasionally have a radio turned on. Never leave lights or the radio on constantly.

Leave your drapes in the normal position. Have a neighbor close them at night, open them at daylight and reposition them every day or so.

Set the bell on your telephone on low. A loudly ringing unanswered phone is a sure sign no one is home. If you have portable phone service remove the phone from the wall. Once this is done the phone's bell will not ring.

Keep your garage door closed and locked so no one can see your car is gone or other equipment in your garage.

Tell a neighbor where you can be reached in an emergency.

Don't let your travel plans be widely known.