

HOME SECURITY FACT SHEET

Source : <http://www.homesecuritycoach.com/>

Precautions To Increase The Security of Your Home

When it comes to the protection of your family and the security of your property there are some simple steps you can take to increase both. Sometimes knowing what to do and what not to do is half the battle in increasing the protection of your family and home. Let's examine a few ways you can make your home a safer place and safeguard your loved ones.

- Never leave a message on your answering machine or door advising you're away from home and when you'll be returning.
- If you're a female it's a good idea to use the pre-recorded message on the answering machine.
- Make sure your children know to never give information out over the phone.
- Never give an outsider a key to your home. Invest in keys that can't be duplicated at just any hardware store.
- Don't give any personal information out to strangers including service providers.

If you've just moved into a house or apartment it's a good idea to have all the keys or locks changed. The fact of the matter is unless you have them installed by a reputable company you won't know who has access to excess keys or who may have made a copy. These simple steps will help you protect your family and property

Keys and Who Has Yours

A key is a pass into your home. With that said it's amazing how many people will just hand the key to a stranger such as a repair man, maid or even a new friend. One way to protect your house is to be very cautious as to who you give your keys to. Perhaps you're the second owner to a home and just assume the previous owner didn't give any keys out, but when it comes to the safety and security of your family that's a pretty big assumption. Many people assume Landlord's automatically change the locks on an apartment when the previous tenants leave, but how can you be sure? There's only one way and that's in paying a reputable Locksmith to come out and change all of the locks on your home or apartment. Then and only then will you know who has the keys to your home.

Another option is to have your house keyed with locks that can only be reproduced by Dealers that meet certain standards. This keeps just anyone from making a duplicate key to your house or apartment. Yes they cost a little more, but when it comes the safety and protection of your family they are worth it.

Doors and Home Security - Increasing your Home Security and Doors

For some reason people feel safe behind doors regardless of how thin they are or what type of security locks are installed on them. Surprisingly many home invasions and burglaries occur when a criminal kicks open the front door of a home. These are the same doors people feel so secure about. In this article we'll examine what to require in your doors throughout the home.

Here's a simple list to provide you with information to determine if the doors of your home are offering you the safety, security and protection you and your family need.

Is the door frame strong enough to withstand a kick or pry bar?

Is the door made of solid wood or metal construction?

Is there glass in the door or windows on the side within three feet of the inside lock?

Is the door secured by a deadbolt lock that extends into the door frame a minimum of 1 inch?

Is the area the lock goes into the door frame reinforced with long metal or steel and how long are the screws going into the door frame? We recommend screws going into the frame and stud a minimum of three inches.

Can the lock be reached in any manner from the outside such as a pet door or with a hanger through the mail slot?

Is there landscaping obscuring the sight of anyone at the door?

Do you have a peep hole to identify who is at the door?

Is the door and surrounding area lit so you can identify who is at the door or your neighbors can see someone at your door?

If you answered no to any of these questions then you need to examine the level of security your door is providing. Keep in mind securing your home doesn't just mean your primary entrance. Home security takes place at every door to your home including the garage door.

Increase Your Home Security By Being The Criminal

One of the best ways to increase the security of your home is to pretend to be the burglar or criminal. Walk out to the street and case your own property all the while asking yourself how you would defeat the home security of this home. Many people that have completed this scenario have told me they've learned of weaknesses in their home security plans they never even thought twice about before.

Once outside of your home walk the entire perimeter and look for any weakness in your security plan. Once you've identified the weakness take steps to make it a strength.

Here are few tips to increase your overall home security by examining your own home or apartment.

- Examine lighting is it sufficient around the home and near entrances?
- Do all doors and locks reflect strength or could some easily be entered.
- Are there signs for security systems?
- Can you tell who lives in your home? Does it look like someone feabile lives there or an athlete with a basketball in the yard?
- Does a dog live at this home? Maybe one doesn't but that large dog dish might mean a large angry dog.
- Where would you hide if you were trying to gain unseen entrance to the home? Would those bushes by the window hide you?

The tips mentioned above should get you on the way to thinking like a burglar. There are many

more weaknesses that may jump out at you once you begin thinking like a burglar to improve your home security.

Safeguards Against Home Break-Ins.

Home safety is an important topic for many homeowners. Locking doors and closing windows are just two of the many precautions they take to safeguard their homes against potential break-ins. In addition, others place fences, motion-detection lighting and other deterrents on their property to keep away would-be thieves — all of which are successful to keep an eye out when you're at home. But what about those times when you're traveling and not spending the night in your own bed?

Many people use the holiday season as a chance to take extended vacations to travel or visit with family members across the country, leaving their homes susceptible to break-ins and their possessions available for theft. With that in mind, here are a few things to consider before you head out for the holidays and leave your home compromised to whatever it is that goes bump in the night.

* **A full mailbox means an empty house.** If your home doesn't have a mail slot in the front door, a telltale sign that you're away is an overstuffed mailbox. Before you leave, arrange to have your mail, newspapers and flyers picked up by a neighbor or friend. If you can, arrange to have newspaper delivery suspended for the duration of your trip.

* **Leave a light on,** and keep any Christmas lights on a timer. If your beautiful Christmas lights display glows in the weeks leading up to Christmas but then suddenly disappears once the holiday arrives, this indicates to any and all would-be thieves that your house is ripe for the picking. By leaving a kitchen light on inside your house and keeping your Christmas lights on a timer, you're at least giving the appearance that someone is home, and a yard illuminated thanks to your decoration lights makes it much more difficult for potential thieves to creep around your house under the cloak of darkness. (Note: stringing up a few lights in the backyard is a good idea as well.)

* **Keep track of your doors.** If he doesn't suspect your home is equipped with a home security system, any burglar worth his salt will check a door for point of entry before anything else. Where possible, make sure your doors are solid-wood construction and are equipped with deadbolt locks with a minimum throw of one inch. The throw is the length the deadbolt extends from the edge of the door. The longer the deadbolt, the safer you are. For doors such as sliding patio doors, install anti-lift plates so a burglar can't simply lift the door out of its track.

* **Secure all windows.** Along with making sure your windows are locked, hang thick curtains or blinds in all windows to keep potential burglars from peering in and seeing your valuables. And just as with sliding patio doors, make sure any sliding windows have similar anti-lift protection.

* **Give someone you trust a spare key to your home.** Leaving a key under the doormat or behind the flower pot, or even in the mailbox, is a bad idea, since most burglars are fully aware of all the traditional hiding places for spare keys. Give a key to a neighbor you can trust or a family member rather than leaving one in what you might think is a remote hiding spot around the house. Also, if you've just moved into your home, replace the keys and locks immediately, since there's no telling who might have had access to your home before you lived there.

* **If you don't feel it's necessary or can't afford to purchase a home security system, purchase a fake one.** Though it might sound childish, it is possible to buy home security decals and lawn signs even if you don't have a home security system. Place these decals in windows and near all doors, and any lawn signs in a well-lit area where potential burglars can see them. There are also very inexpensive products that require little to no installation, which will sound when a window is opened and a sensor is tripped. This scare tactic may thwart a would-be thief.

* **Join a neighborhood watch.** Many neighborhoods today feature a neighborhood watch program where any suspicious activity can be monitored and reported to police by your neighbors when you're home or away. Particularly when you're out of town, this is a great way to provide yourself with some peace of mind.

* **Keep all entry ways to your house well lit.** By keeping all of the possible ways of entry to your house well lit while you're away, you are making it harder for potential burglars to find a viable point of entry without being noticed. This is especially important if you don't plan on putting up any Christmas lights. Also, before leaving for an extended period of time, remember to replace all light bulbs with fresh ones, assuring that your lights will burn brightly during the entirety of your vacation.

* **Keep all landscaping neatly trimmed.** A great place for a burglar to hide and go unnoticed is in bushes that are not well trimmed. Take this option away from him by making sure all of your bushes have been trimmed neatly so he doesn't have easy access to a hiding spot he can use to scope out your house, even while you're home. Another great idea is to strategically plant security bushes near any potential points of entry for a burglar. Placing a rose bush, for instance, near all ground floor windows is a serious deterrent for a potential burglar since rose bushes, while beautiful when in bloom, are loaded with thorns.

* **Put away patio furniture and other backyard tools. Don't provide a thief with easy ammunition.** Store away ladders, chairs and boxes he might be able to use to climb into second-story windows. Also, simple garden tools can be used to break windows or shimmy open doors, so lock those away as well.

Categories: News

Source : <http://www.crimedoctor.com/home.htm>

Your home is your castle...or is it?

Are you really safe once you get home and lock your door? In an open society your home should be the sanctuary for you and your family. Your home is the only environment where you have control over who can get close to you or your family. Protecting your home and family from criminal intrusion should be high on your list of priorities.

Home Burglary

By far, the most common threat to our home is burglary. According to the FBI, a burglary occurs somewhere in the United States every 15.4 seconds. By definition, the crime of burglary is a non-confrontational property crime that occurs when we are not at home. However, becoming a burglary victim can leave a family feeling vulnerable and violated. To avoid becoming a burglary victim, it is important to first gain an understanding of who commits them and why.

The majority of home and apartment burglaries occur during the daytime when most people are away at work or school. The summer months of July and August have the most burglaries with February having the fewest crimes. Burglaries are committed most often by young males under 25 years of age looking for items that are small, expensive, and can easily be converted to cash. Favorite items are cash, jewelry, guns, watches, laptop computers, VCRs, video players, CDs and other small electronic devices are high on the list. Quick cash is needed for living expenses and drugs. Statistics tell us that 70% of the burglars use some amount force to enter a dwelling, but their preference is to gain easy access through an open door or window. Ordinary household tools like screwdrivers, channel-lock pliers, small pry bars, and small hammers are most often used by burglars. Burglars continue to flourish because police can only clear about 13% of all reported burglaries and rarely catch the thief in the act.

Although home burglaries may seem random in occurrence, they actually involve a selection process. The burglar's selection process is simple. Choose an unoccupied home with the easiest access, the greatest amount of cover, and with the best escape routes. What follows is a list of suggestions to minimize your risk by making your home unattractive to potential burglars.

Doors and Locks

The first step is to "harden the target" or make your home more difficult to enter. Remember, the burglar will simply bypass your home if it requires too much effort or requires more skill and tools than they possess. Most burglars enter via the front, back, or garage doors. Experienced burglars know that the garage door is usually the weakest point of entry followed by the back door. The garage and back doors also provide the most cover. Burglars know to look inside your car for keys and other valuables so keep it locked, even when parked inside your garage. Use high quality Grade-1 or Grade-2 locks on exterior doors to resist twisting, prying, and lock-picking attempts. A quality deadbolt lock will have a beveled casing to inhibit the use of channel-lock pliers used to shear off lock cylinder pins. A quality door knob-in-lock set will have a 'dead latch' mechanism to prevent slipping the lock with a shim or credit card.

Use a solid core or metal door for all entrance points

Use a quality, heavy-duty, deadbolt lock with a one-inch throw bolt

Use a quality, heavy-duty, knob-in-lock set with a dead-latch mechanism

Use a heavy-duty, four-screw, strike plate with 3-inch screws to penetrate into a wooden door frame

Use a wide-angle 160° peephole mounted no higher than 58 inches

The most common way used to force entry through a door with a wooden jamb is to simply kick it open. The weakest point is almost always the lock strike plate that holds the latch or lock bolt in place followed by a glass paneled door. The average door strike plate is secured only by the soft-wood doorjamb molding. These lightweight moldings are often tacked on to the door frame and can be torn away with a firm kick. Because of this construction flaw, it makes sense to upgrade to a four-screw, heavy-duty, high security strike plate. They are available in most quality hardware stores and home improvement centers and are definitely worth the extra expense. Install this heavy-duty strike plate using 3-inch wood screws to cut deep into the door frame stud. Use these longer screws in the knob lock strike plate as well and use at least one long screw in each door

hinge. This one step alone will deter or prevent most through-the-door forced entries. You and your family will sleep safer in the future.

Sliding-Glass Patio Doors

Sliding glass doors are secured by latches not locks. They are vulnerable to being forced open from the outside because of these inherently defective latch mechanisms. This can be easily be prevented by inserting a wooden dowel or stick into the track thus preventing or limiting movement. Other blocking devices available are metal fold-down blocking devices called "charley bars" and various track-blockers that can be screwed down.

The blocking devices described above solve half the equation. Older sliding glass doors can be lifted up and off their track and thereby defeat the latch mechanism. To prevent lifting, you need to keep the door rollers in good condition and properly adjusted. You can also install anti-lift devices such as a pin that extends through both the sliding and fixed portion of the door. There are also numerous locking and blocking devices available in any good quality hardware store that will prevent a sliding door from being lifted or forced horizontally. Place highly visible decals on the glass door near the latch mechanism that indicates that an alarm system, a dog, or block watch/operation identification is in place. Burglars dislike alarm systems and definitely big barking dogs.

Use a secondary blocking device on all sliding glass doors

Keep the latch mechanism in good condition and properly adjusted

Keep sliding door rollers in good condition and properly adjusted

Use anti-lift devices such as through-the-door pins or upper track screws

Use highly visible alarm decals, beware of dog decals or block watch decal

Windows

Windows are left unlocked and open at a much higher rate than doors. An open window, visible from the street or alley, may be the sole reason for your home to be selected by a burglar.

Ground floor windows are more susceptible to break-ins for obvious reasons. Upper floor windows become attractive if they can be accessed from a stairway, tree, fence, or by climbing on balconies. Windows have latches, not locks and therefore should have secondary blocking devices to prevent sliding them open from the outside. Inexpensive wooden dowels and sticks work well for horizontal sliding windows and through-the-frame pins work well for vertical sliding windows. For ventilation, block the window open no more than six inches and make sure you can't reach in from the outside and remove the blocking device or reach through and unlock the door.

In sleeping rooms, these window blocking devices should be capable of being removed easily from the inside to comply with fire codes. Like sliding glass doors, anti-lift devices are necessary for ground level and accessible aluminum windows that slide horizontally. The least expensive and easiest method is to install screws half-way into the upper track of the movable glass panel to prevent it from being lifted out in the closed position. As a deterrent, place highly visible decals on the glass door near the latch mechanism that indicates that an alarm system, a dog, or block watch/operation identification system is in place.

Secure all accessible windows with secondary blocking devices

Block accessible windows open no more than 6 inches for ventilation

Make sure someone cannot reach through an open window and unlock the door

Make sure someone cannot reach inside the window and remove the blocking device

Use anti-lift devices to prevent window from being lifted out

Use crime prevention or alarm decals on ground accessible windows

Be a Good Neighbor

Good neighbors should look out for each other. Get to know your neighbors on each side of your home and the three directly across the street. Invite them into your home, communicate often, and establish trust. Good neighbors will watch out for your home or apartment when you are away, if you ask them. They can report suspicious activity to the police or to you while you are away. Between them, good neighbors can see to it that normal services continue in your absence by allowing vendors to mow your lawn or remove snow. Good neighbors can pick up your mail, newspapers, handbills, and can inspect the outside or inside of your home periodically to see that

all is well. Good neighbors will occasionally park in your driveway to give the appearance of occupancy while you are on vacation.

Allowing a neighbor to have a key solves the problem of hiding a key outside the door.

Experienced burglars know to look for hidden keys in planter boxes, under doormats, and above the ledge. Requiring a service vendor to see your neighbor to retrieve and return your house key will send the message that someone is watching. This neighborhood watch technique sets up what is called 'territoriality' which means that your neighbors will take ownership and responsibility for what occurs in your mini-neighborhood. This concept works in both single family homes communities and on apartment properties. This practice helps deter burglaries and other crimes in a big way. Of course for this to work, you must reciprocate and offer the same services.

Get to know all your adjacent neighbors

Invite them into your home and establish trust

Agree to watch out for each other's home

Do small tasks for each other to improve territoriality

While on vacation, pick up newspapers, and flyers

Offer to park your car in their driveway

Return the favor and communicate often

Lighting

Interior lighting is necessary to show signs of life and activity inside a residence at night. A darkened home night-after-night sends the message to burglars that you are away on a trip. Light timers are inexpensive and can be found everywhere. They should be used on a daily basis, not just when you're away. In this way you set up a routine that your neighbors can observe and will allow them to become suspicious when your normally lighted home becomes dark. Typically, you want to use light-timers near the front and back windows with the curtains drawn. The pattern of them clicking on and off should simulate actual occupancy. It's also comforting not to have to enter a dark residence. The same light timers can be used to turn on radios or television sets to further enhance the illusion of occupancy.

Exterior lighting is also very important. It becomes critical if you must park in a common area parking lot or underground garage and need to walk to your front door. The purpose of good lighting is to allow you to see if a threat or suspicious person is lurking in your path. If you can see a potential threat in advance then you at least have the choice and chance to avoid it. Exterior lighting needs to be bright enough for you to see 100 feet and it helps if you can identify colors. Good lighting is definitely a deterrent to criminals because they don't want to be seen or identified.

Another important area to be well-lighted is the perimeter of your home or apartment especially at the entryway. Exterior lighting on the front of a property should always be on a timer to establish a routine and appearance of occupancy at all times. Common area lighting on apartment properties should also be on a timer or photo-cell to turn on at dusk and turn off at dawn. The practice of leaving the garage or porch lights turned on all day on a single family home is a dead giveaway that you are out of town. Exterior lighting at the rear of a home or apartment are usually on a switch because of the proximity to the sleeping rooms. The resident can choose to leave these lights on or off. Security lights with infra-red motion sensors are relatively inexpensive and can easily replace an exterior porch light or side door light on single family homes. The heat-motion sensor can be adjusted to detect body heat and can be programmed to reset after one minute. These security lights are highly recommended for single family homes.

Use interior light timers to establish a pattern of occupancy

Exterior lighting should allow 100 foot visibility

Use good lighting along the pathway and at your door

Use light timers or photo-cells to turn on/off lights automatically

Use infra-red motion sensor lights on the rear of single family homes

Alarm Systems

Alarm systems definitely have a place in a home security plan and are effective, if used properly. The reason why alarm systems deter burglaries is because they increase the potential and fear of being caught and arrested by the police. The deterrent value comes from the alarm company

lawn sign and from the alarm decals on the windows. Home and apartment burglars will usually bypass a property with visible alarm signs and will go to another property without such a sign. Some people, with alarm systems, feel that these signs and decals are unsightly and will not display them. The risk here is that an uninformed burglar might break a window or door and grab a few quick items before the police can respond. Also, don't write your alarm passcode on or near the alarm keypad.

Alarm systems need to be properly installed and maintained. Alarms systems can monitor for fire as well as burglary for the same price. All systems should have an audible horn or bell to be effective in case someone does break in. However, these audible alarms should be programmed to reset automatically after one or two minutes. The criminal got the message and will be long gone but your neighbors will have to listen to the alarm bell, sometimes for hours, until it is shut off. If you use a central station to monitor your alarm, make sure your response call list is up to date. Home alarms, like car alarms, are generally ignored except for a brief glance. However, if you have established and nurtured your neighborhood watch buddy system, you will experience a genuine concern by your neighbor. It is not unusual to have a neighbor wait for the police, allow them inside for an inspection, and secure the residence. A good neighbor can also call the glass company or locksmith to repair any damage, if pre-authorized by you.

The greatest barrier getting to this level of neighborhood participation is taking the first step. You can get help by calling your local crime prevention unit at the police department. Most police departments in large cities have neighborhood watch coordinators to help you set this up. You should invite your adjacent neighbors over to your home for coffee and begin the information exchange. You'll be amazed how the process runs on automatic from there.

Alarm systems are effective deterrents with visible signage

Alarm systems to be properly installed, programmed, and maintained

Alarm systems need to have an audible horn or bell to be effective

Make sure your alarm response call list is up to date

Instruct your neighbor how to respond to an alarm bell

Home Safes

Since the prices of good home safes are falling, having a safe in your home is a wise investment. Home safes are designed to keep the smash and grab burglar, nosey kids, dishonest babysitter or housekeeper from gaining access to important documents and personal property. Home safes need to be anchored into the floor or permanent shelving.

Use the safe everyday so it becomes routine

Protect the safe code and change it occasionally

Install it away from the master bedroom or closet

Operation Identification

This is a program supported by most police agencies. They recommend that you engrave your drivers' license, not your social security number, on televisions, stereos, computers, and small electronic appliances. They suggest this so they can identify and locate you if your stolen items are recovered. I suggest that you go way beyond this step

I recommend that you photograph your valuables in their locations around your home and make a list of the make, model, and serial numbers. This is very important for proof when filing insurance claims. You should keep this list in a safety deposit box or with a relative for safe keeping. Keep receipts of the larger items in case you need to prove the value of the items for insurance purposes. Beyond that, I recommend that you photocopy important documents and the contents of your wallet. You will be thankful that you took these steps in case your home is ever destroyed by fire or flood, is ransacked, or if your wallet is lost or stolen.

Identify your valuables by engraving your drivers' license number

Photograph and record the serial numbers of all valuables

Photocopy the contents of your wallet and other documents

Store the copies in a safe deposit box or with a relative

Home Security Burglary Prevention

Source : http://allcommunications.homestead.com/home_security_advice6.html

Home Security and Safety Checklist

Have you arranged to have member of a law enforcement agency do a professional survey?

Are all trees and shrubs pruned and well maintained to prevent anyone from hiding unseen?

Do any trees, down pipes, lattice work provide easy access to upper floors?

If you have skylights can they be removed from the outside or easily broken?

Any ladders, tools kept outside to assist any potential intruder?

Are you guilty of keeping a hidden house key outside the house where it's sure to be found?

Is your home well lighted with particular attention to exterior doors?

Can your main entrance be seen from the street?

Are exterior doors at least 1-3/4 inch thick and made from solid wood or reinforced with metal?

Do all exterior doors have heavy duty dead bolts and reinforced door jams?

Can anyone gain easy access through a mail slot, dryer vent, or pet entrance?

If doors have glass panels can someone break through and defeat the locking mechanism?

Have all sliding glass doors been protected from being easily lifted out from their frames?

Are all exterior lights and security devices in good working order and protected from breakage?

Does the door from the attached garage leading to the house have a dead bolt?

Does your overhead door have a working electronic door opener?

Does your overhead door have any loose, broken or missing door panels or hardware?

Do you keep the overhead doors closed, and your car locked inside the garage?

Do all windows have reinforced locking devices that can be secured in the open position?

Do all screens and storm windows have reinforced locks?

Do ground level windows have guards or grates?

Are basement windows glass block or protected by grates or security devices?

All irreplaceable items kept in high quality fire resistant safe or in off-site safety deposit box?

Do you have a complete and current video tape or pictures of all your valuables off-site?

Are all firearms kept secured and apart from ammunition?

Household inventory

The previous steps can go a long way to protecting your home but no matter how secure your residence is, if a professional burglar has targeted your home and is determined to break in, the unthinkable may still happen. To aid law enforcement agencies and greatly assist in insurance claims you should maintain a detailed household inventory of all your valuables.

It makes sense to "mark" important items with some permanent identifying mark. There are a variety of simple tools you can rent that will engrave serial numbers, a driver's license number or some other unique marking into your valuables.

Remember most burglars "fence" stolen items in order to get cash, usually for illegal drugs. You'll greatly reduce the chances of someone walking off with your TV, VCR or other valuables if it has a conspicuous ID number that can't be removed, simply because it will greatly reduce its street value and make it too much work to get rid of, and of course it is a lot easier to trace and return the property to the rightful owner.

Today, many people have a video camera. Sweep each room and record the contents from several different perspectives. Next, take close-ups of really important items. To tie-in, have a family member pose with the valuables. In a clear voice identify each item, the date of purchase, price paid and model and serial numbers. Remember to update the tape every time you purchase something new.

If you don't have a video camera, a regular camera also works well. Make a companion audio tape to go along with it. It very important that the tapes or pictures be kept off the property or they may be stolen or damaged. Keep them in a safety deposit box. Now set aside a hour or so and complete the security check list on the following page. Correct weak points as soon as possible and your home and belongings will be more secure

Effective Burglar Deterrent

You've probably heard it several times and it's true! A dog is one of the best deterrents. Not because it's vicious, it need not even be seen, but it has to be heard. A dog with a menacing bark will scar? away a lot of would-be burglars, not only because they don't know what kind of dog you have and what risk it would be to them if try tried to break in, but more likely because a noisy dog will create a disturbance and get attention - the last thing a burglar wants!

If you don't have a dog there's nothing stopping you from pretending. A Beware of Dog sign on your fence, a dog house in the back yard, even a loose dog chain or bowl can drive away a potential burglar. Don't be fooled by companies that provide cheap electronic "dogs" who bark non stop if a intruder trips a relay or otherwise signals his presence. Most experienced prowlers are familiar with these devices and won't be fooled or scared off.

Electronic devices that are effective besides the typical whole house alarm systems for windows and doors are infrared or motion detectors that sense movement or the heat given off by one's body. Anyone approaching too close will trigger any number of attached devices. The most effective are powerful lights or burglar horns that either flood the area with light or fill the air with a deafening sound without notice. Just like a barking dog, the would-be burglar will usually hightail it out of there for fear of being discovered.

To be effective, the sensitivity of such devices must not be set too high or stray animals will set them off too frequently which will get you on the wrong side of your neighbors. Also be sure such devices are high enough that they can't be easily turned off or broken.

Source:

www.chubb.com/international/canada/englishnf/protecting/home_burglary.html

Home Burglary Protection

People give burglars a lot of credit for being clever. More often than not though, thieves are able to take advantage of situations that make their jobs effortless.

Did You Know?

- Home burglars use a very simple, but tried and true, selection process to determine the homes they hit: unoccupied, easy access, good cover and good escape routes.
- Most home burglars are looking for things that are small, expensive, and easily converted to cash – jewellery, guns, watches, laptop computers, and other small electronic devices are high on the list.
- The majority of home and apartment burglaries occur during the daytime when most people are away at work or at school. Burglaries also occur when there are obvious signs that no one is home – at night or during long absences.
- The burglar's first and most lucrative hit is generally the master bedroom where wallets, handbags and jewellery are routinely left lying on a nearby vanity, ensuite or night table.
- More than 30% of all home burglars gain access through an open door or window!
- Burglars dislike alarm systems and particularly dislike dogs. Alarm system window decals and "beware of dog" signs can decrease your chances of being burglarized by up to 75%!

Beyond installing and subscribing to a monitored security alarm service, there are steps you can take to protect yourself against the unpleasant reality of a break-in.

Making Your Home Look Unattractive to Burglars

KEEP YOUR HOME WELL LIT. Both interior and exterior lighting are important to keep intruders at bay. Your home is best protected when there are signs of life and activity inside.

Inside light and appliance timers to turn radios and televisions on and off are inexpensive. Used regularly – whether you are home or out of town – they can be an effective means of ensuring your home looks occupied. These devices are best used when the curtains are drawn, at both the front and back of the home.

Outside lighting that is bright and well placed at doors and along pathways is a significant deterrent to the criminal who doesn't want to be seen or identified. These lights should be powerful enough to provide 100 foot visibility. Light timers and photo-cells are useful to control outside lights as well. Garage or porch lights left on all day and night is a pretty good indication that you are away. Infra-red motion and heat-motion sensor lights are recommended at the rear of your home.

REDUCE FOLIAGE COVER. Obscured doors and windows are targets for forcible entry. Keep your trees, hedges and bushes trimmed to reduce the amount of cover on your property. Cut shrubs below window level and trim trees away from your house.

Don't assume that upper floor windows are too high for a burglar's reach - check for branches that come close to your house – perhaps an invitation for a second floor entry.

LOCK UP YOUR LADDERS AND TOOLS. Saws, axes, wire cutters, electric drills, hammers and ladders can come in very handy for the thief who didn't bring his own. The preferred spot to store these items? Right inside the house.

INSTALL A DOG HOUSE and bowl in your backyard. Dog or no dog, one more signal that maybe this is the wrong house to break into.

GOING AWAY? GO FOR THE "LIVED-IN" LOOK. ([click here for a checklist](#))

Making Your Home Difficult To Enter

LOCK YOUR DOORS, WINDOWS AND GARAGES. No kidding - unlocked windows and doors continue to provide easy access to the lazier thief. An open window that is visible from the street may be the one reason your home is selected.

The favored door entry points are the well-covered back door and the garage door. Burglars know that people are more likely to put heavy locks on their main front door and more flimsy ones on others. Garages frequently have door access right into the house. These doors are routinely forgotten by the resident. Once into the garage, the burglar also has complete access to a wide array of useful "thief enabler" tools, ladders or even spare sets of keys to the house and cars. Always lock your car, even in the garage.

Summer brings with it some added risks. An increasingly common approach in the summer months is for the thief to enter an unlocked front door while the residents are distracted – perhaps entertaining on the patio out back - waiting for their next guest to let themselves in the front door.

1. Use additional blocking devices on all accessible windows, still allowing for adequate ventilation and escape in the event of a fire.
2. Use devices on windows that will prevent them from being lifted out.
3. Place your alarm decals, Beware of Dog decals or Neighbourhood Watch stickers on all accessible windows.

CHECK THE QUALITY OF YOUR LOCKS AND DOORS. The most common way used to force entry through a door with a wooden frame is to kick it open. Burglars know that the strike plate that holds the latch or lock bolt in place is a construction weakness. It makes sense to upgrade to a four-screw, heavy-duty, high security strike plate. The extra expense is worth while, since this one step alone will deter most forced entries through a door.

1. Upgrade your doors to solid core or metal for all entrance points. If you choose wood, then invest in heavy-duty strike plates that have long screws.
2. Install quality, heavy-duty one-inch deadbolt locks on each exterior door, including the door leading to the garage. Double-cylinder locks that require a key to open from the inside provide additional security.
3. Equip your entrance doors with wide-angle peepholes (180°) mounted not higher than 60 inches.

SECURE YOUR SLIDING DOORS. Sliding glass doors are a prime target for burglars – generally in the back of the home and often open in warm weather. Even when closed and latched, the most common mode of entry, apart from breaking the glass in the door, is for the burglar to pry the door near the latch and lift the door off the track.

A simple stick is all you may need to give you the protection you need. The stick should be cut to a length that, when inserted in the bottom track of your sliding door, between door and frame, provides the door no give. You can also install pin devices that prevent lifting by extending through both the sliding and fixed portions of the door.

1. Use a blocking device on all sliding glass doors.
2. Maintain your latches and door rollers in good, properly adjusted condition.
3. Install anti-lift mechanisms – e.g., door pins.
4. Place your alarm decals, beware of dog decals or Neighbourhood Watch decals right near the latch.

NEVER HIDE A KEY OUTSIDE! Burglars know all the hide holes. The fact that the key is still there also does not mean it has not been duplicated. If you must, leave a key with your trusted neighbour. Any lost key signals a need to change the locks as soon as possible

Protecting Your Valuables and Yourself

ALARM SYSTEMS increase the potential of the burglar being caught and arrested. While many people choose not to place alarm monitoring system decals and signs around their property, statistics prove that prominent display of the decals and signage provides significantly more deterrent value. A burglar will be more likely move on to the first house that does not have these signs. An uninformed burglar on the other hand might break a window or door and have time to grab a few items within easy reach before the police arrive.

Depending on the type, alarm systems consist of a few main components that work together to protect your home when you are not there as well as when you are sleeping:

- Infra-red motion detectors detect any motion inside the house. They should be placed in central areas like main hallways and stairwells.
- Door and window contacts are magnetic and create an electrical current between adjoining magnets located on a door and a door frame or a window and a window sill. When the alarm is on and the door or window is opened, the current is broken and the alarm is tripped. Every door and window large enough to provide access to your home should be equipped with a contact.
- Window or door screen wires activate if the screen is removed from the frame or if the screen is cut away from its frame.
- Panic buttons: are generally placed near beds or doorways and are even available in a wireless version that can be worn as a necklace. The panic button can be manually activated if you detect or suspect an intruder.
- Glass breakage sensors are placed on windows to detect vibrations when glass is broken to gain entry to your home.
- Stress sensors are placed under rugs, carpets or floor joists. They activate an alarm when stepped upon and are effectively used in front of safes, valuable pieces of fine art and collectibles and wine collections.
- Closed-circuit TV systems allow you to view remotely one or more areas of your house or property.

The most recent series of robberies in the Montreal area were facilitated by the burglar cutting the phone lines, preventing the system from notifying the monitoring company. Satellite driven security alarm systems are the latest addition to the line-up of technology for the consumer needing fail-proof protection.

PROTECT YOUR JEWELRY FROM THEFT

HOME SAFES offer you both burglary and fire protection and are an economical addition to your home. In-ground safes installed in concrete can be installed by anyone with general knowledge of house construction and concrete work. A good time to consider installation of this kind of safe is when you will be performing other major renovations

IDENTIFY YOUR VALUABLES This might seem rather obvious to many of you, but it is surprising how many people fail to keep good track of what they have and what it looks like! An up-to-date record of what you own and its value will make life so much easier for you, your insurer, police and others in the event of a burglary or fire.

You can't go wrong photographing or videotaping all your valuables and recording the make, model and serial numbers of your electronic devices. Digital cameras are great for this, and you can then maintain an electronic file that can be easily updated as you collect more.

An audio recording is effective for making a spoken list of collections - books, tools, stamps, coins, where you can capture more detail to complement your visual record.

Keep purchase receipts for major items. Keep a photocopy of all important documents in your wallet: credit cards, drivers' license, birth certificate, Social Insurance card, etc.

Store all your inventory and important document records in a safety-deposit box or another secure location away from your home.

OPERATION IDENTIFICATION is a public service program supported by most police services units. The program recommends that you engrave your driver's license number or SIN on televisions, stereo components, computers and small personal electronic devices. If stolen and found by Police, your goods can be returned to you.

Being A Good Neighbour

We expect that many of you take most of the physical precautions you can to protect your home. But having one or more neighbours who are interested in and care about your home and your safety can be the icing on the cake.

Being a good neighbour means more than just looking out for someone else. It means being pro-active:

- **ESTABLISH TRUST** with your neighbours on either side and two or three across the street. This means communicating often, keeping them apprised of your schedules and ensuring you know theirs. Developing good relationships with your neighbours will permit you to ask them to watch your home when you are not there and for you to do the same for them.
- **LEAVE SPARE HOUSE KEYS** with a neighbour. Having a good neighbour means you will never be led to hide a key outside! It will allow you to have regular services such as plant maintenance, inspections and cleaning continue when you are away – reducing the number of people who know you are gone. Neighbours can also gather your mail, newspapers, and flyers regularly and put them inside your home, as well as inspect your home occasionally to ensure everything is fine.
- **EDUCATE A NEIGHBOUR** on the operation of your alarm system and ensure the roster of authorized PIN # holders is up-to-date with your provider to avoid unpleasant experiences for those trying to help.
- **GOING AWAY?** Click here for a checklist for creating the “lived-in” look.

Going Away? Go For The “Lived-In” Look – (CHECKLIST)

Before you leave

- Minimize the number of people who know you will be away.
- In summer, have grass mowing and landscaping current and ensure maintenance continues.
- In winter, arrange for regular snow shoveling. If you have electrically heated sidewalks and/or driveways and want to turn them off to conserve power, ensure your neighbour knows how to reactivate.
- Set timers on lights and certain appliances in various rooms.
- Check batteries in smoke detectors/alarms.
- Suspend mail and newspaper delivery if away for more than two days.
- Lock up your ladders and tools, preferably right inside the house.
- Turn down the ringer on your telephones; leave your answering machine on; do not change your message to say you are away.
- Advise your alarm system monitoring provider if you are leaving for any extended period, and update your authorized roster.
- Tell a neighbour your travel schedule and contact information and leave them the household keys.

When you are away, have a neighbour

- Open and close your drapes and blinds.
- Collect any flyers that have made it to your door.
- Park a spare car in your driveway.
- Put a bag of their garbage at your curb edge on garbage day.
- Re-fill bird feeders as required.
- In summer, water the lawn, planters and hanging baskets.
- In winter, clear snow off any cars left outside.
- Watch your home for any unusual activity, unplanned deliveries etc.

With some timers, the lights go on and off at different times each day, which means a burglar can't pick up on a pattern. Motion sensor lights outside can also startle a burglar and make him flee. Consider installing them in front and back.

SOURCE: <http://www.central-insurance.com/docs/ho-burgl.htm#list>

The Top 25 on the Burglary List

Although the December holiday season is the prime-time for burglars, they are more than happy to relieve you of your possessions any time of the year. Here's a list of the most stolen items from data reported to insurance companies, burglar alarm companies, and the FBI.

High on the list of most-stolen are:

- Bicycles
- Cameras
- Furs
- Gold and other precious stones or metal.
- Audio/video tapes, CD's, and DVD's
- Personal computers
- Tools
- Toys

The remainder of the list includes:

- Ammunition
- Antiques
- Coins and Stamps
- Cosmetics
- Clothing and accessories
- Currency, notes, securities, etc.
- Fine Arts
- Household appliances
- Jewelry
- Luggage and leather goods
- Perfume
- Records
- Sporting goods
- Stereo equipment and televisions
- Electronic games
- Watches
- Wine, liquor and beer

Tips on Protecting Your Home Against Burglary

Just about every community is experiencing an increase in the number of burglary or theft losses. What can you do to lessen your chance of your home being burglarized?

It's almost impossible to make your home completely secure from a burglar, but you can make it difficult enough or time-consuming enough to encourage a burglar to look elsewhere.

First, stand outside your house at night and compare your home with others in the neighborhood.

Is your home the easiest target for a burglar? Is it well lit, or dark? Is it easy for someone to hide near your home and not be seen? For example, a high fence or lots of shrubbery may be great for privacy, but it also provides a good place for a burglar to hide.

Do you regularly lock your home when you're gone? Make sure all members of your family lock up when they leave. This includes windows as well. Sliding glass doors are especially easy to open, and a security bar placed in the channel is a simple yet effective prevention tool. Always leave an interior light on when you're gone, and don't hide a key outside the house.

Always make it a point to do a complete security check before you leave for the weekend or vacation. Let a trusted neighbor know when you're going to be gone overnight or longer, and ask them to keep an eye out for anything unusual. It's also a good idea to notify your local police if you're going to be gone for any length of time. If you're going to be gone for more than a day or two, make arrangements for someone to pick up your mail and newspaper, or stop delivery entirely. Also make arrangements to have the lawn mowed if you are gone for any length of time. Use an automatic timer to turn lights on and off according to your normal routine.

You don't have to be an expert or invest a lot of money to improve the security of your home. Being aware of theft and burglary prevention and then taking basic security measures can go a long way toward protecting your family and property.

<http://www.myhomeadvise.com/home-security/protecting-against-more-than-just-break-ins>

Home Security Systems - Protecting Against More Than Just Break-ins

When most people think of monitoring their home security system they think primarily about its ability to alert the police of a break-in. What they aren't aware of is the lesser know capabilities of the modern alarm system, which is environmental monitoring

For example: you can monitor the amount of carbon monoxide that is present in your home. Smoke Detectors, water level sensors and low temperature devices can also be monitored by home security systems. Although monitoring of these devices is becoming more popular it will be some time before it becomes a regular feature of every system.

News accounts have helped push the awareness of these capabilities. Every time there focus is placed on the effects of radon gas or other dangers such as fires in the home there is an increase demand for this type of monitoring.

Unfortunately it takes a tragedy to motivate most people to take action. Adding environmental monitoring devices to a new security system or existing ones is relatively simple. Once installed, the alarm system is programmed to make an audible sound or silent alarm depending on what type of device is being monitored.

If you have a low temperature sensor to prevent freezing pipes you wouldn't want the siren blasting you out of bed in the middle of the night but you would want to know if there is too much carbon monoxide in your home.

For those who are aware of the full capabilities of an alarm system it may come down to the cost issue whether or not to add extra equipment. Although cost is a valid concern one should also consider all the risks involved.

A break-in takes a human and a conscience decision to target a particular house. Where as fires and other acts of nature are not so discriminating. Think about all of the things that run on electric in a home. Any one of them has the potential for starting a fire.

Don't get me wrong; I'm not talking about spontaneous combustion but normal wear and tear to the electrical cords etc. A fire or a flooding basement can damage an entire house costing many thousands of dollars. A break-in on the other hand is less likely to reach the same level of damage

When put into this perspective it's not as hard to justify the cost of the equipment versus the potential risk you can avoid. Check with your insurance agent to see what discounts they give for monitoring your home security system.

By Arthur Wright

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-  Tips For Simple And Effective Burglary Prevention
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