



Home Burglary Prevention

Make your House "Hard"

That is, make it seem difficult to a burglar. If he/she perceives it as difficult to enter, the chances are that he/she will try somewhere else.

Develop Rapport with Neighbors

Establish that you can count on them and that they can count on you to report suspicious activities to the police. Nothing beats a cautious neighbor, ready to call 9-1-1 for burglary protection.

Have Good Lighting

Put plenty of lighting around the perimeter of your house. If you don't want your house lit up all night, install the type of lights that go on only when triggered by motion. They have the added advantage of startling a potential burglar.

Install a Burglar Alarm

The best kind is the kind that rings in the house, not the kind that electronically (and silently) reports to a central office. Your neighbor is less likely to phone in a false alarm than someone miles (or States) away listening to a machine. They also cost less. The police department recommends that you have alarms professionally installed.

Have a Second Line of Defense

If a burglar gets past your perimeter alarm system, there should be a secondary alarm system inside. One type is a sensor under a rug that goes off when more than 25 pounds of pressure is applied (probably better if you have pets). The other is some type of sonic detector that senses motion in a room.

Dogs

Dogs are a good deterrent - burglars will generally avoid a house with a dog. But they aren't foolproof - most dogs tend to be too friendly.

Sliding Glass Doors

Many burglars enter homes through poorly protected sliding glass doors. Additional locks and security measures here will prevent the door from being opened or lifted out of the track.

Screws installed in the track above the sliding door frame will prevent the door from being lifted out of the track. Drill a pilot hole in the top track above and slightly in, from each corner of the sliding door frame section and install a screw into each hole. Adjust the screws so that the head of the screw just barely clears the frame when it is moved back and forth.

Auxiliary patio door locks may also be purchased and installed easily.

Doors in General

Have solid doors with strong locks and strike plates at all entrances. Weak strike plates for

your locks will totally defeat strong locks; they can be kicked open. Metal doors are best; thick, solid wood doors are next. Never use a hollow-panel door on any kind of entrance.

Double Doors

These doors need solid security as they are easily jimmed or forced open. Flush lever bolts installed at the top and bottom of the doors are recommended. Make sure the bolt is long, sturdy and mounted into a solid door frame.

Doors with Windows

If you have doors with glass windows or glass ornamentation, they should be secured the same way as double doors (above). This prevents the burglar from breaking the glass and reaching inside to unlock the door.

Garage Doors

Standard locks on garage doors are easily pried, allowing a burglar access to your home without detection. Cane bolts and hasps are excellent protection. Make certain each side of the garage door is secured to prevent prying open a crawl space. The door leading from the garage into the house should be securely locked. The more barriers you provide against the burglar, the better protected you are.

Hinges

Many homes have doors which open to the outside, exposing the hinge pins. Despite your good strong lock, the burglar can remove the pins and lift the door from the frame. To prevent this, remove two opposing screws from each leaf of the hinge. Screw a long lag bolt into the frame side of the hinge leaf and saw off the head leaving about 1/2 inch protruding. Drill out the opposite hole to allow the bolt to enter when the door is closed. Do this to the top and bottom hinge plates. The hinge pins can now be removed by the burglar but the door will remain firmly in place. This technique is good for any door, no matter how the hinges have been placed.

Door Viewers

In order to avoid opening your door without knowing who is there, install a door viewer. This device has a wide angle lens to let you see someone standing outside your door without opening it.

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 one inch from the edge of the door.
- The connecting screws that hold the lock together are on the inside of the door.
- The strike plate is attached to the door frame with screws that measure at least three inches in length.
- The cylinder has a steel guard around the key section. The cylinder guard should be tapered or rotate freely around the key section to prevent wrenching if it is twisted.

Single Cylinder Deadbolt

A solid bolt, activated by a key from the outside or a knob on the inside, slides into the door frame. The lock cannot be slipped or easily pried. Deadbolt locks are only as good as the door and frame they are installed in.

Double Cylinder Deadbolt

This lock is basically the same as the single cylinder deadbolt, except that it requires a key to be used from either side to function. These are no longer recommended - they can be dangerous because unless the key is in the lock while someone is in the house, you could get locked in the house during an emergency (like a fire).

Padlocks

When selecting padlocks to secure your garage door, storage shed, fence gate or tool box, do not economize. Low priced locks are made from low quality materials and easily pried open or cut with bolt cutters. Look for these features when purchasing a padlock:

- Double locking shackle at the toe and heel
- Hardened steel shackle, the larger the diameter the better
- Five pin tumbler
- Key retaining feature (prevents removal of the key when unlocked)
- A strong steel hasp should be used with the padlock

Sliding Windows

Sliding glass windows should be given the same security treatment as sliding glass doors. Use the same supplementary locks or screws in the frame. Screws installed in the track above the sliding window frame will prevent the window from being lifted out of the track.

Drill a pilot hole in the top track above each corner of the window frame and install a screw into each hole. Adjust the screws so that the head of the screw just barely clears the frame when it is moved back and forth.

Casement - Crank Windows

These windows are easily secured. The latch should close properly with the window tight. With the latch in a closed position, drill a small hole through the latch frame and handle. Insert a metal pin through the hole to lock the window.

For additional security, a small padlock can be used in place of the pin. Key operated replacement latches are also available from a locksmith or hardware store. Keep the key handy in case of emergency.

Double Hung Windows

An easy, inexpensive way to secure your windows is to use the "pin" trick. Drill an angled hole through the top frame of the lower window partially into the frame of the upper window. Then insert the pin (a nail or an eyebolt which is slightly smaller in diameter than the hole). The window can't be opened until you remove the pin. Make a second set of holes with windows partially open so you can have ventilation without inviting intruders. You may also purchase special key locks for windows at a hardware store.

General Tips

Look for clues that that people may be casing your neighborhood. A strange kid ringing doorbells and saying, "Can I speak to Charlie" may be checking to see if anyone is home. Also be suspicious if you see someone sitting for long periods in a parked car.

Get involved in Neighborhood Watch programs.

Remove a burglar's cover - keep hedges and trees trimmed away from your house.

When you are going to be gone for an extended period, don't make it obvious; park cars in the driveway. Use timers to turn indoor and outdoor lights on and off. Leave the radio on (or put it on a timer too). Stop mail and newspaper deliveries. Have someone mow your lawn. Notify this department that you are going to be away. We will check your house for you periodically.

Don't keep valuables in your bedroom. Crooks normally make a beeline for the bedroom because they know that people tend to keep cash and jewelry there. Keep your valuables in an unlikely place, but not in the linen closet or the freezer (too common).