

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH - Home Security Measures

HOME SECURITY MEASURES

You must be aware of the potential risk of crime in your home in order to prevent it.

First...Remember that the key factor in most crimes is: **OPPORTUNITY**. **IF THEY CAN'T GET AT IT, THEY CAN'T TAKE IT!**

Many burglars want to avoid people, dogs, alarms, lighted areas, and strong doors.

Then...follow a regular plan of home security to deter the potential burglar or other intruder.

PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

- Know your Block Captain; share contact info for your work, home, cell & email.
- Every resident is a “neighborhood watchman” for their block, & the neighborhood.
- Learn how to Observe and Report comprehensively—Where, When, Who, What, & a Weapon? Immediately write down details.
- **Do NOT EVER Hesitate to Call 911** to report an unusual, suspicious, or criminal activity has seemed to occur or is in progress.
- When in doubt, call 911. Report to your Block Captain & Neighborhood Listserve.
- Watch for “movers” or “repair people” at a house where no one is home. Call 911.
- Report license numbers & descriptions of suspicious cars/trucks—“movers,” “repair people,” solicitors, and slow-moving cars with no apparent destination.
- Call 560-4601, to report non-emergency observations, when time is not a factor.
- Select a neighbor as partner; for extra vigilance in watching each other’s houses. Especially when one is out of town, pick up mail & newspaper, check doors and windows periodically, and exchange out-of-town contact information.
- Request a home security check from our local crime prevention police officer.

LOCK DOORS, WINDOWS, GARAGES.....always (even if in side yard, yes it happened!)

- Secure all obvious (and not so obvious) points of entry to your home. Pretend you are the burglar - stand outside your home & plan how you would get in; then install secure dead-bolt locks, in addition to door handle locks on all doors and windows.
- Always close and lock garage doors.
- Never leave doors or windows unlocked; (NOT even for a trusted worker)
- Sliding glass windows can be blocked with a wooden bar in the track, a “Charley-bar,” or a metal peg in one or more drilled holes.
- Burglars rapidly evolve new ways to pick locks, now it is called ‘booming;’ crow bars or even garden shears can pry open the wood casing at each lock site.
- Avoid displaying valuable items near windows with open drapes or shades. Always close shades and drapes at night. Install new deadbolt locks when moving into an apartment or previously owned home.
- If you are working in the yard, lock your doors and set your alarm – criminals often watch for these opportunities!

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INSTALL A HOME ALARM SYSTEM (and use it day and night)

- Investigate the many options: direct reporting to police, window sensors, glass break sensors, motion detection sensors.
- Display security alarm company signs in front & back yards & stickers on windows.

LOCK CARS.....always (even if you go in the house for one minute; yes, it has happened)

- Secure automatic garage door transmitter in glove compartment of your car.
- Extra keys hidden under the fender or chassis can be located by criminals.
- Steering wheel locks are routinely used in big cities.
- Avoid keeping valuable items, e.g., purse, laptop in your car.

USE TIMER TO TURN LIGHTS & RADIO/TV ON & OFF

(even if it's daytime & you are out for just a few hours)

- Use a timer or photo electric cell that automatically turns lights and a radio/tv on and off at appropriate times; Have several that operate at different times.
- At dusk, it is helpful for one or more lights to turn on, every day, so that when you return parts of the house are lighted.
- Leave a radio on with the volume turned low when leaving home, even for short periods; for longer periods, put the radio or television on a timer.
- Make home appear occupied.

ELIMINATE HIDING PLACES

- Keep all shrubbery trimmed near your doors and windows— don't provide concealment or climbing platforms for the burglar;
- Keep your grass cut, your leaves raked, etc., to indicate a well cared for and occupied home.

LIGHT UP YOUR HOUSE AT NIGHT

- Brightly illuminate all entrances, preferably with vandal-proof fixtures.
- Lights with motion detection can focus on doors and garage doors.

IDENTIFY VALUABLE ITEMS (Operation IDentification)

- Especially for electronic items, TV, stereo, computer, camera, etc.
- Use an electric pen to engrave a unique number on metal items; use a permanent marker for other items.
- Mark personal property indelibly with a unique identifying number to permit positive identification, if the items are lost or stolen. A description of the item and the unique number or serial number can be entered on a nationwide computer.
- Insurance companies recommend taking still photographs or video film to document the appearance and condition of your personal property, in case of theft, fire, flood or other disaster.
- Operation I.D. also deters the burglar by making it more difficult to dispose of stolen goods and increases his chances of discovery and conviction.

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DON'T GIVE A HELPING HAND

- Never hide a key outside—most hiding places are obvious to burglars. Keep extra keys out of sight and in a safe place.
- Lock up all ladders, ropes, or tools that could help a burglar gain entry;.
- Empty your mailbox or arrange to have it emptied as soon as mail is delivered.
- Never leave a note on the door explaining why you are not at home.
- Display only your last name on your nameplate or mailbox.

From NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH: A Manual for Citizens and for Law Enforcement.
National Sheriffs' Association 35 pp. See www.usaonwatch.org/pdfs/watchmanual.pdf