



Safety Tips for Residential Burglary

There are a lot of things you can do to boost home security and make your house burglary-resistant. Here are a few tips you can use to help you keep your family safe and your home:

- 1) Never leave doors or windows unlocked, and never hide a key to your house outside where it can be easily found.
- 2) Use solid core or metal doors that are secured with good quality deadbolt locks. Look for or ask the locksmith for door locks with an ANSI grade 1 rating. Deadbolt locks should have a horizontal bolt at least 1 inch long. With shorter bolts, a burglar can more easily use tools to spread the door frame and open the door.
- 3) Consider using locks that have an internal anti-saw pin that makes it difficult for a thief to saw through the bolt with a hacksaw. Also, some locks come with an anti-drill feature using hardened steel chips inside the lock that will destroy a drill bit in case a burglar tries to drill through the lock.
- 4) The casing, which is the outside housing of the lock, should be made out of hardened steel and be beveled. A hardened steel casing makes the lock more resistant to impact, and the beveling helps prevent a burglar from using a pipe wrench to twist the lock free.
- 5) A metal strike plate is attached to the door jamb to hold the bolt or latch in place. The most common way for a thief to force a door open is to kick it open by kicking at the plate. You can make this harder by using a heavy four-screw high security strike plate. The wood screws used to attach it should be 3 inches long. That way, they will go through the jamb and be anchored in the door frame stud.
- 6) Using at least one long screw in attaching each door hinge will further secure the door against forced entry.
- 7) Treat a door between an attached garage and the house as an outside door and use the same type of locks that you use on the front and back door.
- 8) Any window or glass panel in the door that is closer than 42 inches to the lock should be reinforced with an invisible security film so a burglar can't break the glass and reach through to unlock the door.
- 9) Windows should be attached to a home security alarm and have locks that operate from the inside so they can be used for escape. Windows can also be made stronger and safer by coating them with an impact-resistant film.
- 10) Another home security measure for windows is to install stops that prevent them from being opened more than 6 inches. If you do, though, everyone in the home needs to know how to remove the stops to make an emergency exit.
- 11) Use a metal or wooden rod in the track on sliding glass patio doors to prevent them from sliding open.
- 12) Never leave a ladder that can be used to access the roof or a second story window outside or in an unlocked shed.
- 13) Cut back tree limbs that hang over the roof, and remove any lower branches from trees next to the home.

Additional Tips:

- a) Use automatic light timers throughout the house and have them turn on and off in a way that simulates your normal patterns. Look for light timers that have battery backup so the timer doesn't stop if there is a power failure. Using timers that have more than one on-off cycle can create the illusion of movement from room to room.

- b) The same kind of timers you use on lights can also be used to turn radios or TVs on and off.
- c) Consider using timed automatic drape and curtain openers. Drapes that are always closed or always open suggest no one is home.
- d) Turn the volume of your phone's ringer down so someone outside can't hear them ring.
- e) If you can, have your calls forwarded while you're away. Burglars sometimes call to see if anyone's home before a break-in.
- f) Arrange to have your lawn cut or snow removed from your walks if you're going to be gone for a long period.
- g) Instead of stopping your mail and newspaper delivery, ask a neighbor to pick them up and hold them for you. Seeing deliveries being made makes a burglar think someone is at home.
- h) Ask a neighbor to use your trash can from time to time and to put it out at the curb and bring it back on trash day.
- i) Always park your car in the garage with the garage door closed when you are there. That way someone watching for patterns won't know your car isn't there when you're gone.
- j) In the interest of home security, never leave notes on the door. They just say to a burglar, "Come on in."

“One of the easiest crimes to prevent -- burglary -- is also one of the most common.”

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