

Home Security

A small investment of time and money can make your home more secure and can reduce your chances of being a victim of burglary, assault or vandalism. Get to know your neighbors. Watchful neighbors who look out for you as well as themselves are a front line defense against crime.

Check the following:

- Make sure every external door has a deadbolt.
- Secure sliding glass doors with commercially available locks or broom handles.
- Secure double-hung windows by sliding a bolt or nail through a hole drilled at a downward angle in each top corner of the inside sash and partway through the outside sash. Secure basement windows as well
- Don't hide keys in mailboxes or under doormats. Give an extra key to neighbor you trust.
- If you have moved into a new house or apartment, re-key the locks.
- Door locks aren't as effective if they are installed on flimsy doors. Make sure all exterior doors are solid wood or metal
- Doors should fit tightly in their frames, with hinge pins on the inside.
- Install a peep-hole or wide-angle viewers in all entry doors, so you can see who is outside without opening the door. Door chains are not a security device.

Before you invest in alarms:

- Check with several companies and decide on the level of security that fits your needs.
- Look for an established company and check references before signing a contract.
- Learn how to use your system properly.



- To discourage burglars from selecting your home as their target of opportunity, make sure to:
 - Prune back shrubbery that hides doors and windows. Cut back tree limbs that could help a thief climb into windows.
 - Illuminate porches, entrances, and yards - front and back. Consider timers or motion sensors.
 - Keep your yard well maintained. Store ladders and tools inside your locked garage, basement, or storage shed when you're not using them.
 - Clearly display your house number so police and other emergency vehicles can find your home quickly.
 - Put lights and radios on timers to create the illusion that someone is at home when you are away.
 - Update your home inventory, with complete description, serial numbers, photographs or engravings.

Other Tips: If you come home and find a screen has been cut or a door has been forced open, don't go in. Call the police.

- If you hear a noise in the night that sounds like somebody breaking in or moving around, call the police and wait for them to come.
- If you can leave safely, do so. Otherwise lock yourself in a room, or if the intruder is in the room, pretend to be asleep.

Think carefully before buying a firearm for protection. Guns can be stolen and sold to anyone, or captured and used on you or the police. If you do own a gun, lock it up and learn how to use it safely.

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