



# Protecting Your Home

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*The following concepts are provided for your consideration. Since there are always variables which will effect these general strategies, Association Times does not suggest that these strategies are appropriate for every particular situation.*

**Appearance of Occupancy:** Maintaining an appearance of occupancy, even when your residence is vacant, is important not only to remain in compliance with the association covenants, but is essential to reducing the likelihood of burglary attempts. Timers which automatically regulate the interior lighting of a home can create such a deception. Timers should be used while on vacation, when you are out to dinner or even during the day while you are at work. One type of automatic timer has a 24-hour dial and allows you to set an on-and-off time to coincide with normal light usage in your home. These timers simply plug into the wall, and the lamp you want to use is plugged into the timer. For the most realistic deception, several timers and lamps should be used to simulate occupancy. For instance, a radio and lamp in the living room might be on from 6:30pm to 11:00pm; at 11:00pm a lamp might go on in the bathroom until 11:30pm; then a bedroom lamp would be on from 11:30pm to midnight. This would indicate to anyone watching the house that it was occupied and the residents were going to bed. During the day, leave drapes and shades in their normal position the way you have them when at home.

**Do not advertise your vacation plans:** Inform one or two persons of your vacation plans --- a trusted neighbor who can keep an eye on things while you are gone. Have them pick up your newspaper and other deliveries. Do not forget to arrange to have the lawn mowed in order to maintain a lived-in appearance.

**House Numbers:** Make sure that police, fire, and paramedics can find your home in a time of emergency. Have your house numbers clearly mounted on a high contrast background (with Association approval).

**Exterior Lighting:** Again, subject to the association's design guidelines, exterior lighting is extremely important in residential security. Each exterior doorway should be lighted to prevent a burglar from concealing his/her activities. Yards and windows should be lit to prevent concealment. Yard lights and entrance lights can be equipped with sensors which will turn the light on at dusk and off at dawn.

**Landscaping:** Keep doorways, windows and porches clear when planting bushes and flowers. Remember that bushes that provide you with privacy also give a burglar a place to hide. Prune large trees. Low limbs can provide second story access. A well-maintained lawn is a very effective clue that someone is at home and cares about their home. Plan your landscaping with both privacy and security in mind. Walks and driveways should be kept free from obstacles that offer concealment to intruders.

**Know who is there:** All homeowners should be able to observe a caller before opening the door. Do not allow strangers in your house. Burglars sometimes try to come into a home in order to assess valuables and security measures for a planned burglary when you are not at home. Ask repairmen and others who claim to have business to show identification. If you have the slightest doubt, telephone their office, getting the number from your directory. If there is an emergency and someone asks to use your telephone to call an ambulance or tow truck, ask them to wait outside your home while you place the call.

**Emergency phone numbers:** Police, fire, and paramedic emergency telephone numbers should be listed on each telephone in your home. Telephone stickers with these numbers are available from the police, sheriff, or fire departments. In addition, if you have a babysitter for your children, make sure he/she is aware of what to do in an emergency situation. Write down your address next to the emergency telephone numbers. If he/she needs immediate assistance, they will be able to tell emergency vehicles what location they are calling from.

**If you interrupt a burglar:** Do not seek confrontation with a burglar. If you come home to find a door or window unexpectedly open, do not go in. Instead, go quickly to a nearby home and phone the police. If you hear or see a prowler in or around your home, do not investigate it yourself. Call the police. Never struggle with a burglar unless you are clearly in danger of serious physical harm and forced to defend yourself.

