

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST HOME BURGLARY

According to FBI statistics, a house, apartment or condominium is burglarized once every 15 seconds. Fortunately, burglary is probably the most preventable of crimes. You can dramatically reduce the risk of being a victim by taking a few simple precautions.

Most residential burglaries occur during the day (6 a.m. – 6 p.m.) because homes tend to be vacant. Most burglars do not give great amounts of thought to planning the job and assessing the benefits vs. dangers, so understanding how they choose a target can go a long way in reducing your chances of being a victim.

Most burglars look for:

- Something worth stealing
- Easy access combined with low visibility
- A home that is unoccupied

The Basic Rule: *Lock Your Doors and Windows!*

- Keep the doors locked even when you are in the house. Your presence may not deter someone from trying to come into your home.
- Always install new locks on all of the doors in a home or apartment when you move in, even if it is a newly built home. Never use locks someone else has had a key to.
- Never leave an extra key to the house in the mailbox, under doormats, over door frames or anywhere else where it can be easily found.
- Don't give keys to anyone except people who live inside the house and others you really trust. Never give keys to service people.
- Install a small peephole in the front and back doors. Use the peepholes to look before you open a door for someone, regardless of whether it is daytime or nighttime.
- Sliding doors are often points of entry for burglars. There should be two locks on such doors to make sure they are secure. Another easy security measure is placing a board or broom handle inside the track to prevent the door from being opened from the outside.
- Every window should have a lock on it, preferably a key lock. It's also a good idea to have an additional lock that prevents the windows from being lifted higher than a few inches—that way they can't be opened wide enough for someone to climb inside.
- Basement/cellar windows are often left open and are an easy place to enter a home or apartment building. Close and lock them at all times!
- Windows with air conditioners are a favorite point of entry for burglars. Nailing or screwing the window in place prevents the window from being opened and prevents the air conditioner from being stolen.

Lighting and Visibility

- Burglars tend to avoid homes that are well lit. It's a good idea to install motion detector lights around your house instead of just leaving lights on. The lights coming on and turning off will attract the attention of neighbors. Install these lights at least 8 feet above the ground so they are more difficult to disable.
- Check your outdoor lights regularly to make sure they are in good working order.
- When you are gone, use automatic timers on lights when you are away from home. If you don't have timers, leave at least one light on and close the curtains and blinds.
- Keep the shrubbery trimmed to a low height and away from the windows. Bushes are an excellent place for someone to hide and not be seen when burglarizing.