

Theft Prevention Tips for Homeowners



Is your home a target for a thief?

A burglary occurs approximately every 15 seconds in the United States. Home security has become an important issue for everyone, no matter where you live. While there's no foolproof way to stop every break-in, many burglaries are preventable. Keep in mind that burglars search for easy targets.

Here are some security measures that may force burglars to look elsewhere:

Use the right locks and solid doors

- Choose a single-cylinder dead bolt lock backed by a reinforcing strike-plate with three-inch screws. The dead bolt should be at least one inch thick and extend at least one inch into the doorframe when locked. Standard door locks may not be enough to deter experienced thieves. For example, a thief can open key-in-the-knob spring bolt locks by pushing back the lock bolt with a credit card or similar flexible object.
- Use solid core or metal clad entrance doors along with sturdy door frames firmly attached to your home. Many intruders enter residences by physically destroying lightweight hollow core doors and flimsy door frames.
- Be sure entrance doors have wide-angle peepholes or view grills so you can see visitors without opening the door. Ask anyone who comes to your door for identification before allowing them inside.

Secure sliding patio doors and windows

- For best protection, use a bolt lock.
- A second choice would be a dowel or pipe in the slider track. This helps, but isn't perfect. Thieves can bypass them by lifting the doors or windows out of their slide channels. You can help prevent this by tightening adjustment screws to eliminate "play" in a door or window.

Protect your home with proper lighting

- Keep entryways, pathways, stairwells, porches, yards and parking areas well lit.
- Mount lights up high so burglars can't easily unscrew bulbs.

Don't give thieves an easy way in

- Keep shrubs trimmed away from your home. Prune back tree limbs, particularly from upper windows and porch roofs.
- Keep your garage locked, along with any storage sheds on your property, especially if they contain tools or ladders thieves can use to break into your home. Use a quality dead bolt lock here, too, if you can.
- Invest in a heavy-duty gun safe if you have firearms in your home. This will keep guns out of criminals' hands, as well as away from children, friends and relatives who don't know how to handle firearms safely.

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