



Residential Burglary Prevention Tips

Make sure your doors and windows are always locked. And I mean **ALL** windows--even bathroom windows. It has been speculated that more than half of break-ins occur through first-floor windows. So, securing these should be a top priority. Second floor windows are also vulnerable, much more so than you would expect. People leave ladders and other items like patio furniture, etc., that burglars make use of to hoist themselves onto the 2nd floor balcony and right into your open bedroom window. And don't forget to secure side doors and garage doors as well.

Thorny bushes under windows will make thieves think twice before going in that way. Also, keep your bushes and hedges trimmed to a minimum; don't give thieves a place to hide while they scope out your place. Gravel and loose stones can also alert you (or a dog) that someone is approaching your house. And make sure your yard is well lit during the night! Burglars are considerably less likely to burglarize a home where there are dog(s) inside than not.

Make sure your valuables are hidden from passersby. Use privacy curtains (sheer curtains that let in light but block the view) so people can't see in while you're away at work.

Experts say that a third of burglars come in right through the front door. If your front door is all or partially made from glass, they can easily reach in and turn a regular indoor deadbolt. Double key deadbolts are require a key not only to enter, but also to exit. With a double key deadbolt lock, if thieves do break in, getting your stuff out is going to be very difficult unless they break the door down. The downside to double key deadbolts is they can be dangerous in the event of an emergency, such as a fire. Consider this carefully before installing one. If you do put one in, keep the key very close to the door in a hiding place that's easy to remember. You should also have a lock far away from any windows that are a part of your door.

Security experts say most thieves don't want to smash sliding-glass doors because that's too noisy. They'd much rather slide it open. To prevent this, secure your sliding door by placing a sawed-off broom handle in the track to prevent it from opening.

If you're going away for a week, **DO NOT** tell people on your answering machine that you're out of town. If you're going to be away, make sure you purchase a timer that will automatically turn on lamps when it gets dark. Also, either put a temporary stop on your mail, or have a neighbor pick up your mail, packages, and newspapers so your home doesn't look vacant.

Make sure you religiously back up your computers and laptops in the event those items are stolen. And again, keep valuables out of sight. Take pictures or video of your valuables. Know serial numbers, the model numbers and purchase prices of your most expensive items. The insurance company will want this information if they're stolen.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, in today's day and age, you want to be notified instantly to your Smart Phone if someone is at or entering your house. There are various inexpensive and easy to install systems that do just that and also provide you footage of the person that is stored up in the 'Cloud.' With these systems, you can also call 911 immediately and give a detailed description of who is doing what at your home, even if you're away at work or on vacation.

If you do discover that your home has been burglarized:

- Do not go into the house. If you've already walked in, leave immediately. The thieves may still be inside, and it's not worth your life to find out.
- Call the police from your cell phone or from a neighbor's house.
- Don't touch anything. The thieves might have left fingerprints.