

Security Precautions for Home & Business

General precautions

1. Remove trees or branches that are close to your premises, they give burglars access to upper levels.
2. Windows, skylights, pet doors, patio doors, garage and carport access doors, upper level balcony doors and small bathroom windows are common forced entry points. If possible keep them locked when away and secured when at home.
3. Thieves will also search for "hidden" keys in all the usual spots - under the mat, on a ledge or door frame, in a planter. Instead give a spare key to a trusted neighbor or hide a key on their property. If a prowler comes across the key they won't know what it opens.
4. Lighting is cheap security; always leave some lights on in your house at night, even when you are home.
5. When going out make sure your home looks occupied by leaving more than one light on.
6. Close the drapes at night to hide the fact that no one is home. Drapes, curtains or blinds should fully cover windows.
7. Always leave outside lights on at night. Thieves would rather work in the dark so no one can spot them, notify police, and identify them.
8. Never place the packing materials from an expensive item on the curb for trash pickup. Instead, cut up the box and tie it with string, carefully hiding the product identification.
9. When someone comes calling, don't pretend you are not at home. Burglars want to find homes that are un-occupied so they can break-in. However, never open your door when you don't know or trust the person(s) on the other side. Talk through the door or a nearby window. Chain locks are not strong enough, do not open the door! If you have to open the door slightly a floor mounted, retractable door wedge is an excellent security option.
10. Never give out your personal information over the telephone; you don't really know who you are speaking with. Often the caller will ask when they can contact you and then they have a better idea when you are going to be away.
11. Engrave your valuables with your driver license number. It makes your items more difficult to sell, increases the chances of your property being returned to you, and assists the police in their investigations by proving ownership.
12. Burglar alarms will not prevent a break and enter but they will alert your home security monitoring service to call the police and shorten the time thieves can spend in your home, limiting your losses.
13. Use deadbolt locks that extend at least 1 inch into the strike plate.
14. All entrance doors should have a solid core, a hollow wood door can be easily kicked in.
15. Locks on the inside of the door should be at least 40 inches from glass.
16. Re-key all locks before moving into a new residence.
17. Windows left open for ventilation should be secured.
18. Basement windows should have security bars.
19. Make sure the areas around windows are free from concealment. If not, cut back plants or trees that block a clear view. Basement windows are a common point of entry and are often hidden by shrubbery.
20. Your house number should be easily visible from the street so emergency vehicles can identify your home easily in the event of an emergency.
21. Make sure doorways are well lit.

22. If your home is equipped with an air conditioner placed within a window frame, make sure it is secured from inside the residence. If the air conditioner is secured from the outside, a burglar could remove the air conditioner and gain access to your residence.
23. Keep all tools and ladders securely locked up at night as burglars may use these tools to break into your house or your neighbor's house.
24. Upgrade your fixed-code garage door opener to a remote system with a control unit.
25. Equip your garage door with a locking device in addition to the garage door opener. For example put padlocks on the inside rails so the door can't be forced open.
26. Never leave a garage door opener in your vehicle. If your vehicle is broken into your registration will provide your home address and the thieves could drive to your home and use the garage opener to enter the premises.
27. Keep the garage locked at all times; sometimes garages contain tools that can be used to open the connecting door to your house or to attack your neighbor's house.
28. Secure your safe to the floor (a concrete floor is best). Safes are not hidden in your closet; this is one of the first places a thief will check. Locate your safe in the basement if possible, hidden from view.

Apartments

1. Open lobby doors only for people you know.
2. Re-key all locks after you move in to a new residence.
3. Use only your initials and last name to identify yourself on the lobby list. If single, adding another initial will make it look like two people live in the apartment.
4. Cover up mail slots in the lobby so potential thieves don't see the same mail there day after day indicating an absence.
5. If you have a mail slot in your apartment door cover it up so no one can look in to determine if the apartment is empty.
6. Even if you live on a high floor keep your windows and sliding doors locked, thieves can jump or climb from balcony to balcony to gain access.

Vacations

1. When vacationing, ask a neighbor to park their car in your driveway.
2. Arrange to have the lawn mowed (or sidewalks shoveled) and the landscaping kept in good appearance.
3. Don't cancel subscriptions or paper deliveries, have someone pick them up instead.
4. Use electrical timers to randomly turn lights on and off.
5. Don't talk about your schedule to anyone.

Businesses

1. Secure your safe to the floor.
2. Change your safe's combination often.
3. Vary your schedule and route to the bank when making deposits.
4. Make frequent deposits so a minimal amount of cash is stored at your business.
5. Install 'motion sensitive' as well as 'constant' outside lights.
6. Place inside lights in the rear of rooms so that shadows can be seen from the street.

Break and Enter - After The Fact

1. When arriving home and a burglar is still in your home go to a neighbor and call 911. Don't let a crime against your property become a crime against your person. **DO NOT APPROACH THE CULPRIT.**
2. If the thieves have already left call the police using their non-emergency phone number.
3. Do not handle any items that may have been moved or touched by the thieves until police can investigate, they may be able to lift fingerprints. Fingerprints may also be found at the forced point of entry, don't clean up until the police have investigated.