



Residential Burglary Prevention

Residential burglary is often a crime of opportunity. Offenders may look for targets that are easily accessible and allow them to remain unseen while committing the crime. In order to combat this, residents should be aware that there are steps they can take to reduce the likelihood of being victimized. The following information should be considered suggestions for making your home a harder target against burglary.

Keep Doors and Windows Locked

The first line of defense in your home is the doors and windows. When doors and windows are left unlocked, it is very easy for burglars to enter the home undetected. Make sure exterior doors are all solid-core wood or steel, not hollow-core doors. Also, invest in a good lock. The lock should include a deadbolt with at least a 1" throw bolt. The strike plate should attach to the door jamb and into the wall studs with 3 ½" screws. The same methods should be considered for interior garage doors. For sliding glass doors, insert a metal or wooden rod in the bottom door track to prevent the door from being forced open. Another option is a "Charley Bar" which is a more permanent and visible means of preventing the door from opening.



Figure 1 - Charley Bar

Keep Garage Doors Closed

Even if the interior garage door is locked, make sure to close the garage door as well. This is especially true when you leave the house. If a burglar is able to enter the garage, he has the opportunity to steal tools, bicycles, or any other items stored inside. He may also have access to ladders that can be used to climb up to second-story entrances, thereby accessing the house. Additionally, an open and empty garage serves as an advertisement to potential offenders that no one is home.

Keep Trees and Bushes Trimmed

When trees and bushes are large or overgrown, they provide places for burglars to hide while they lurk outside of the home. Keep trees trimmed 5' above the ground and bushes down to 2' tall or less. This will provide greater sight lines around your property and limit the opportunity for someone to hide in the area.

Add an Alarm System



There are several different types of alarm systems that can be added to a home to make it a harder target for burglars.

- Audible alarms make noise when someone enters the home without the proper code. These alarm systems are most useful if you have neighbors who are home during the day and can call the police if the alarm sounds.
- Monitored alarms connect to an alarm company who will call you when the alarm is triggered. If they do not receive a response or if you ask for police assistance, they will contact the police department to check on the home.
- Audible/Monitored alarms are a combination of both types of alarm systems. An audible noise will sound when the alarm is triggered, and the alarm monitoring company will be alerted.

Lighting

Though burglaries often occur during the day, it is still important to have adequate lighting both inside and outside the home to serve as a deterrent. This is especially true during the winter months when daylight is shorter. Consider a light with a motion detector that will turn on if there is movement in the area of your home. Also, leave lights on inside when you are not home to give the appearance of being occupied. Connect some of your lights to timers that are set to go on or off even when you are not home. This is especially true when you will be gone for an extended period of time.



Figure 2 - Interior & Exterior Lighting

Meet Your Neighbors

Maintaining relationships with your neighbors is a great way to reduce the likelihood of being burglarized. Neighbors can act as an extra set of eyes and ears around your home, and will recognize suspicious activity if it is occurring. Cooperation among neighbors means you will all look out for one another and call the police if something suspicious is occurring. Talk to your neighbors about joining the Highland Park “Neighbor to Neighbor” program – a City-led initiative to create a safer community and improve communication among neighbors.