

Improving Home Security



House Numbers

House numbers on our homes are important. They can save police officers, fire fighters and paramedics' valuable time. House numbers are especially important if you live where there is an alley. Police officers and fire fighters will often times respond in the alley, as access is sometimes better.

Landscaping

Fences: Privacy vs. chain link. Burglars prey on privacy. Fences that allow activity to be seen in your yard are preferable to "privacy" fences.

Tress and shrubbery: Should be trimmed 6-inches below windows and at least 3-feet away from doors. Shrubby such as rose bushes or other thorny varieties serve as a good deterrent to window peepers.

Landscape rock: Large landscape rock (golf ball size or larger) can be used to damage your property. Small landscape rock (smaller than golf ball size) is both decorative and, if someone walks on them, a person will be easily heard.

Locks / Strike Plates

Deadbolt locks: The deadbolt lock has a bolt that must be activated by a key or thumb turn. It offers good security because it is not spring activated and cannot be opened with a credit card.

A single cylinder deadbolt is activated with a key on the exterior side of the door and a thumb turn piece on the interior side. Install this lock where there is no breakable glass within 40-inches of the thumb turn piece. (Otherwise a burglar can break the glass, reach inside and turn the thumb piece.)

A double cylinder deadbolt is key activated on both sides on the door. It should be installed where there is glass within 40-inches of the lock. Double cylinder deadbolt locks can hinder escape from a burning home so always leave a key in or near the lock when someone is home. (Double cylinder deadbolt locks are only permitted in existing single-family homes, town homes and first floor duplexes used exclusively as residential dwellings.

Both single and double cylinder deadbolt locks should meet these criteria to be a good security device:

- The bolt must extend a minimum of 1-inch and be made of case hardened steel.
- The cylinder guard must be tapered, round and free spinning to make it difficult to grip with a pliers or wrench. It must be solid metal – not hollow casting or stamped metal.
- There should be at least a five-pin tumbler system or equivalent locking device.
- The connecting screws that hold the lock together must be on the inside and made of case hardened steel. No exposed screw heads should be on the outside.
- The connecting screws must be at least one-fourth inch in diameter and go into solid metal stock, not screw posts.

A heavy duty strike plate helps strengthen door frames better than a regular strike plate. (A strike plate is the jamb fastening that receives the deadbolt in the locking position.) The heavy duty plate uses four to six, three-inch screws, not two, three-fourth inch screws used in regular plates. The longer screws go through the frame into the jamb making it harder for someone to split the frame when kicking the door. A heavy duty strike plate will strengthen the door jamb and reinforce the lock.

Window Locks

Auxiliary locks: Pin your windows or add an auxiliary lock to your double hung windows. This type of mechanism will allow you to secure your window when you open it (5-inches or less) for ventilation. Newer windows have higher quality locks while older double hung windows are easily jimmied or pried open. Double hung windows can be secured by taking these simple, inexpensive precautions:

- Drill a hole at a downward angle through the first sash and into but not through the second sash. Then pin window by driving a nail into the hole. Pinning braces the window against prying. More holes can be drilled to pin the window open for ventilation.
- Keyed locks offering effective protection are available for windows. These inexpensive, easy-to-install locks should replace thumb turn locks that offer little security. **Master key all window locks and show children how to use them. Do not use keyed locks on windows in sleeping areas.**

Lighting

Motion detector lights are very effective in deterring crime. They also light up your driveway or entry doors when you are leaving or coming home.

Dusk to dawn lighting is a strong deterrent against criminal activity, and it constantly lights up your entry doors and possible obstacles that would otherwise be unseen.

Landscape lighting is low voltage lighting that can highlight your property line, light up your sidewalk and also light up the exterior of your windows – making your home a less attractive target to night time burglars.

Interior lighting using light timers makes a home look occupied. Good lights to leave on are bedroom and/or bathroom lights.

Radios and televisions are also good items to have on timers. If a radio playing a talk station is heard from the outside of a home, it gives the appearance that a conversation is being carried on and someone is home. The perception of someone being home greatly reduces the possibility of a burglary.

Information provided by:
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