

Home Security

Tips to Keep Your House Safe

1. Homes without a home-security/alarm system have a significantly higher break-in rate, so invest in an alarm system to protect your home ... and *use* it.
2. Moving into a house with an old alarm system? Contact the provider to inquire about an upgrade.
3. Consider a security system equipped with ultrasonic sensors that can detect movement inside your home, not just breaches of your doors and windows. Certain alarm systems allow your home to have separate zones so specific areas can always stay armed. Also, a panic button can be hooked up to your alarm system's central server for added protection inside your home.
4. Less expensive security options include motion sensors, sound detectors and photocells, all of which can be used to turn on lights when triggered. Individual window alarms, which are activated by vibration, can also discourage thieves.
5. A thief may try to dismantle your alarm system, so make sure the system's central panel is in a secure spot. In addition, since construction or wildlife can disrupt outside wiring, have your system tested annually.
6. All exterior doors should be solid-core doors with heavy-duty dead bolts installed in a sturdy frame with long screws so they can't be kicked open.
7. Install locks or secondary security devices on all accessible windows so they can't be opened far enough for someone to crawl through from the outside.
8. Place security bars over your basement windows and around your home's removable AC units to prevent intruders from crawling inside.
9. Install dead bolts with captive keylocks on all doors located next to windows. These locks have removable thumb latches so that even if a thief breaks a window, he still can't reach around and unlock the door.
10. Apply window film to make your glass shatterproof; tinted film can further prevent thieves from window-shopping and even block out UV rays so furniture won't be damaged by the sun.
11. Use curtains or blinds over any windows or doors that are easy to see into.
12. Always lock up all doors and windows — including second-floor windows — even if you're just going out for a few minutes.
13. A peephole allows you to see who is at your door without having to open it and without them looking into your home.
14. A chain lock allows you to talk to someone outside your door without opening it all the way.
15. If you have the same key for all your locks, have one door re-keyed and use that key to give to contractors or visitors. If the key is lost, you will only have to change one lock on your house.

16. Do you and your family members often misplace keys? Use color-coded key chains that work with a radio transmitter. Then just press the button that matches the color of your key chain and a tone will go off, letting you know where your keys are.
17. Keep a wooden dowel or stick in the track of sliding glass doors to prevent them from being opened from the outside if the lock is broken.
18. A barking dog — even a small one — will deter most burglars. The noise draws attention, which is the last thing burglars want.
19. When you move into a house or apartment, have the locks re-keyed. There's no telling who the previous residents may have given a spare key to, or whether they kept one themselves.
20. Keep expensive equipment and items away from your windows.
21. To avoid being locked out of your house, secure a spare key in a combination or key lockbox on your property, or leave one with a trusted neighbor.
22. Original locks may look quaint, but they are nearly always unsafe. Modern locks can be refitted while keeping the original integrity of the house.
23. Reflective numbers outside on the front of your home will make it easy for police and ambulances to find your house in case of emergency.

Tips to Keeping Your Garage Safe

1. Treat any door to your garage like an external door, which means making sure it has a good dead bolt on it.
2. Keep your car locked with the alarm on, even in your garage, and consider additional anti-theft devices such as The Club.
3. By cutting the release cord located on your electric garage-door opener, you prevent intruders from gaining easy access to your home through your garage window. If you need the cord, use a clothes hanger in its place.
4. Make sure garage lights can be turned on from inside the house so you never have to walk into a dark garage.
5. Change your garage-door opener code. New openers come with factory-set codes that are meant to be changed, but many people neglect to do so. Burglars will scour neighborhoods with common brands of remote openers, looking for garage doors that will open.

Tips to Help Keep a Safe Yard

1. Keep ladders, garbage cans, building supplies and tools locked up out of view so you don't provide an intruder with the means to break into your home.
2. Put big, bold numbers on your mailbox so your home can easily be identified in case of an emergency.

3. Never put your name on your mailbox. Anyone can call directory assistance, get your number, and find out you aren't home.
4. Don't hide a spare key near your front door; burglars know all the hiding places. Leave a spare key with a trusted neighbor instead.
5. Planting thorny shrubs, rosebushes or cacti around the outside of your home can discourage burglars from entering your property.
6. Placing alarm-company signs or neighborhood-watch decals on your property tells burglars to steer clear of your home.
7. Trim shrubs and trees so they do not provide hiding places for an intruder. Remove tree limbs that could allow someone to climb to an upper-story window or balcony.
8. A solid privacy fence can provide a burglar with cover to break into your home. Consider an iron railing, picket or chain-link fence instead.
9. Keep all points of entry to your home well-lit. Consider installing motion-sensor lights on the rear and sides of your home.
10. If you have video surveillance cameras, get a lockbox to store the central recording device. That way, a thief can't make off with the record of their crime.
11. Consider buying a wireless annunciator, which will alert you — anywhere in your home — when someone comes up your driveway or otherwise enters your property within 20 to 50 feet of its range.

Tips on How to Keep Your Valuables & Identity Safe

1. Having photos, videos and serial numbers of your valuables can be extremely helpful in identifying your stolen goods.
2. Get your driver's license number (NOT your Social Security number) engraved on any expensive electronic equipment. Doing so can not only assist in their return, but can actually dissuade theft: Marked property is difficult to sell or pawn.
3. Photocopy receipts of expensive items and store them in a safe place so you have proof of purchase for insurance reasons.
4. Use a bolted-down safe that cannot be carried out of the house to store important documents, information and valuables. It's a simple investment that will protect vital possessions.
5. Shredding documents with personal information (such as bank and credit-card statements or anything with a Social Security number on it) will keep a burglar or someone looking through your trash from finding your information and assuming your identity.
6. Keep equipment for expensive hobbies (boats, Jet Skis, golf clubs, etc.) covered up — even better, keep them locked up out of sight.
7. What you think is well hidden is nearly always easy pickings for burglars, so lock things up instead of keeping them in "clever" hiding places like the freezer, the bag of sugar or the cookie jar.

8. Leaving empty boxes from your new computer, DVD player or TV on the curb for trash pickup advertises that you have things worth stealing in your home. Break boxes down or cut them up to conceal what they contained.
9. Keep information about your safe-deposit box separate from any personal identification documents such as passports or Social Security cards. If these documents are stolen, you could suffer further losses if someone is able to use them to gain access to your safe-deposit box.
10. Secure furs like you would any other valuable: Keep them in a closet with a dead bolt, and be sure to monogram or write your name on the skin of your fur to aid identification and recovery in case it is stolen.
11. Be sure to lock your bikes and four-wheelers to a bolted-down surface.
12. An art-security hanger makes a painting difficult to remove from the wall by "locking" it in place. In addition, a product like "DataDots" records identification information on an adhesive the size of a grain of sand, so your artwork is traceable if stolen.

For more tips about Identity theft go to the Identity Theft and Prepaid Legal Service tip section (see table of contents for pages).

Security and Safety Tips For When You're on Vacation

1. Set lights on timers or light sensors to turn on and off in the evening. A TV or radio can also be set on a timer to add to the illusion that someone is at home.
2. Suspend newspaper delivery so papers do not pile up in front of your house.
3. If you have a separate mailbox, rather than a mail slot, put your mail on hold.
4. Ask a neighbor to keep an eye on your house and pick up any mail, fliers, newspapers, packages, etc., left outside, and shovel your walkways if it snows.
5. If you use a yard service, make sure they come to your house while you're away. An overgrown lawn is a good sign that no one is home.
6. Leave a car in your driveway, or ask a neighbor to park there.
7. Don't record a new message on your home answering machine indicating where you are or how long you'll be away. You'll be issuing an open invitation for someone to rob your house.
8. Leave shades, curtains and blinds in their normal positions. Covered windows during the daytime indicate an empty house.

Extra Security & Safety Tips

1. Getting to know your neighbors will help them to immediately alert you of any suspicious behavior on your property. Notifying them when you're going away and how you can be contacted in case of emergency will allow you to be aware of a crisis as soon as it occurs.

2. Be careful to whom you disclose personal information. Don't discuss vacation plans or expensive hobbies in public places — you never know who's listening!
3. If you're a professional working out of your house, rather than use your home address on your business cards or Web site, rent a post-office box instead.
4. Becoming involved in a neighborhood association or neighborhood watch will give you information you need to know about any suspicious activity in your area.
5. Be informed: Check your local newspaper for crime reports in your neighborhood.
6. If you come home and something looks questionable — a slit screen, a broken window, an open door — don't go inside! Call the police from your neighbor's or from your cell phone.
7. If you are new to homeownership, contact your local crime-prevention organization for advice on how to start securing your home. With no super or manager to rely on, all those jobs will need attention from you now!

You can visit our web site (www.caases.org) for a list we have furnished of security companies that offer security monitored - installed and self monitored - self installed security systems.

Common Burglary Facts

- 1) Burglary is the unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or a theft. A person can be convicted of burglary even if nothing was actually stolen.
- 2) A burglary occurs approximately every 15 seconds in the United States.
- 3) On average, a burglary results in a dollar loss of about \$1,600.
- 4) About 30 percent of all burglaries are classified as "unlawful entry," meaning the burglar was able to gain entry without using force — often through an unlocked door or window.
- 5) Nearly 66 percent of all burglaries are residential, and of those, 62 percent occur during the daytime. Most burglaries occur between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., when no one is likely to be at home.
- 6) Renters are more likely to be the victims of property crime than homeowners.
- 7) Only 13 percent of reported burglaries are solved, or "cleared," by the police.
- 8) Only about 15 percent of property stolen in burglaries is recovered by the police.
- 9) Nearly 85 percent of all burglaries occur in large metropolitan areas.
- 10) Almost half of the nation's reported burglaries occur in the South: 45 percent, as opposed to the Northeast's 11, the Midwest's 20 and the West's 24.
- 11) The highest percentage of burglaries occur during the summer months of July and August, when many people are away from their homes on vacation, or have left windows open for ventilation.

12) Arrest records reported to the FBI indicate that approximately 70 percent of all burglary arrestees are white and 86 percent are male.

13) About 30 percent of private homes have security systems. Homes without security systems are two to three times more likely to be broken into.

And if you're curious about more general crime stats, check out the FBI's ***Crime in the United States Report*** (2003), the source for much of the above.

Best Defense – Get Educated

The best way to get educated is to attend a **Refuse To Be a Victim** 3 to 4 hour seminar. For more information on this and what you will learn visit caases.org/refuse.html. Also, attend a **Home Invasion Escape** class, a **Rape Escape** class, and **Self Defense** class. Visit our home page caases.org and you will see a variety of classes that are available.

Home Security Quiz

- 1. Most burglars gain entry to a house through a window.
True or False**
- 2. Unsecured garden tools and ladders can contribute to a break-in.
True or False**
- 3. You should keep a spare key hidden somewhere outside your door.
True or False**
- 4. Most burglaries occur after dark.
True or false**
- 5. Burglars target sliding glass doors because they can break the glass.
True or False**
- 6. You should not post your name on your mailbox or the front of your home.
True or False**
- 7. When you go out of town, you should leave your interior lights turned on so it will look like someone is home, especially at night.
True or False**
- 8. Taking a visual and written inventory of your possessions can increase the odds of recovering them if they are stolen.
True or False**
- 9. To protect small valuables such as jewelry and cash, hide them in unusual places such as dresser drawers, in the freezer or under a mattress.
True or False**
- 10. Only the presence of a large-breed dog will deter a burglar.
True or False**
- 11. When you go out of town, you should record a new message on your home answering machine to let callers know where you are and how long you'll be gone in case there is an emergency.
True or False**
- 12. Getting to know your neighbors can help protect your home.
True or False**
- 13. A home security system will deter most burglars.
True or False**
- 14. A privacy fence that blocks the view of your home from the street and neighboring homes can protect against break-ins.
True or False**
- 15. When you move into a house or apartment, you should have the locks re-keyed.
True or False**

**16. Your landscaping can help deter break-ins.
True or False**

Home Security Quiz Answers

1. The answer is **false**. The most common way for a burglar to enter a house is through an unlocked or unsecured door. Garage doors and back doors are usually the weakest points of entry and provide more cover, so don't forget to keep them locked.
2. The answer is **true**. Don't leave anything in your yard or in an unlocked storage area that a burglar could use to gain entry to your home. Ladders can provide access to an upper-story window, and some garden tools can be used to pry open windows or doors.
3. The answer is **false**. An experienced burglar knows where to look for a "hidden" spare key around your home. The best place to leave a spare key is with a trusted neighbor. In addition to being able to rescue you if you lock yourself out, your neighbor can let service people in for you or make your house look lived in while you are away.
4. The answer is **false**. The majority of burglaries happen between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., when no one is likely to be home.
5. The answer is **false**. Burglars try to avoid breaking glass because the sound would draw too much attention. Sliding glass doors are a favorite point of entry because they tend to have flimsy locks that are easy to open. Take care to secure these doors by keeping a wooden dowel or stick in the track, for example, so they cannot be opened from the outside, even if the lock is broken.
6. The answer is **true**. Once they have your name and street address, would-be burglars can easily get your telephone number. If no one answers when they call, they know that no one is home.
7. The answer is **false**. Rather than leaving your house dark or keeping the lights burning all day and night — a sure sign that no one is home, and a waste of electricity — you should set some interior and exterior lights to go on and off at different times during the day and night. Use timers and/or install photosensitive lights that automatically turn on after dark and shut themselves off at daybreak. For an added dose of reality, you can even put the TV or radio on a timer so it will *sound* like someone is home as well.
8. The answer is **true**. Having photos, videos and serial numbers of your valuables can be extremely helpful in identifying your stolen goods. It's also a good idea to engrave your driver's license number on any expensive electronic equipment.
9. The answer is **false**. While it may sound odd to hide jewelry in the freezer or keep cash in a bag of flour, enough people do it that burglars will search all the usual (and unusual) hiding places. You are better off having a safe professionally installed in your home to protect your valuables.
10. The answer is **false**. A burglar doesn't want *anything* to bring attention to himself, and barking dogs can draw notice. Thus, even a tiny yappy breed can deter a burglar if it makes enough noise.

11. The answer is **false**. Never record a message on your home phone indicating that you are away from home. If a burglar obtains your phone number, it's an open invitation for them to break in and help themselves.
12. The answer is **true**. There are many good reasons to get to know your neighbors, but one of the most important is to protect the security of your home and neighborhood. Asking a neighbor to keep an eye on your home while you are away is one of the simplest but most effective ways to protect your home from burglary. He or she can help disguise the fact that your home is unoccupied by parking a car in the driveway, mowing the lawn or shoveling the walkway, and picking up any newspapers, packages or fliers left outside.
13. The answer is **true**. Studies have shown that homes protected by an alarm system have a significantly lower break-in rate than those without one. A prominent sign or decal indicating the presence of a home security system can discourage would-be burglars.
14. The answer is **false**. A privacy fence can provide cover for someone trying to break into your home. Consider a picket or chain-link fence instead.
15. The answer is **true**. There's no telling who the previous residents gave a spare key to, or even if they kept one for themselves. Play it safe and have the locks changed.
16. The answer is **true**. Keeping hedges, trees and shrubs neatly trimmed eliminates hiding places for a would-be burglar. Consider removing tree limbs that would allow someone to climb to a second-story balcony or window. Planting thorny shrubs, rosebushes or cacti around your home is also a good way to discourage people from trying to break in through the windows.