

# Safeguard Your Home From Burglars

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## Some interesting statistics concerning break-ins in the United States:

- Theft makes up more than three-quarters of all reported crime.
- In 2005, law enforcement agencies reported more than 2 million burglary offenses.

According to a survey, burglars enter homes through the following locations:

- 81% enter through the first floor;
- 34% of burglars enter through the front door;
- 23% enter through a first-floor window;
- 22% enter through the back door;
- 9% enter through the garage;
- 4% enter through the basement;
- 4% enter through an unlocked entrance;
- 2% enter through a storage area; and
- 2% enter through anywhere on the second floor.

## Consider the following safety measures:

### Exterior Doors

- Doors should be made of steel or solid-core wood construction. Hollow-core wood doors are more easily broken than heavy, solid-core doors.
- Doors should be free of signs of rot, cracks and warping.



- Doors should be protected by quality deadbolt locks. Chain locks are not adequate substitutes for deadbolt locks, although chain locks may be used as additional protection.
- If a mail slot is present, it should be equipped with a cage or box. Mailslots that are not equipped with cages or boxes have been used by burglars to enter homes. If no box or cage is present, burglars can insert a contraption made of wire and cord into the mail slot and use it to open the lock from the inside.
- If a door is equipped with glass panes, they should be installed far from the lock. Otherwise, burglars can smash the glass and reach through the door to unlock the door.
- Spare keys should not be hidden in obvious locations. Burglars are very good at finding keys you believe are cleverly hidden. The best place for a spare key is in the house of a trusted neighbor. If keys must be hidden near the door, don't place them in obvious locations, such as under a doormat, rock or planter.
- Install a peephole in doors so you can see who is on the doorstep before you open the door.
- Consider installing bump-resistant locks. "Bumping" is a technique developed recently that can open almost any standard lock with less effort than is required by lock-picking. This technique uses "bump keys," which are normal keys with slight modifications. Lock companies such as Schlage Primus and Medeco manufacture a number of locks that offer some bump-resistance.

#### Pet Doors:

- Pet doors can be used by burglars to enter homes. Some burglars have reached through pet doors in order to unlock the door. Don't install a pet door, but if one is necessary, it should be as small as possible and installed far from the lock.
- Another reason to forgo pet doors is that a crafty burglar may convince or coerce a small child to crawl through a pet door and unlock the door. Also, some burglars *are* children.
- Electronic pet doors are available that open only when the pet, equipped with a signaling device in their collar, approaches the door. These doors are designed to keep stray animals out of the home, and may provide protection against burglars, as well.

#### Sliding Glass Doors:

- They should be equipped with locks on their tops and bottoms.
- They should not be able to be lifted from their frames.
- A cut-off broom handle, or a similar device, can be laid into the door track to prevent it from being opened.

### Illumination:

- Lights should be installed on the exterior of all four sides of the house. Burglars prefer darkness so they cannot be seen by neighbors or passersby.
- When you are not home, a few lights should be left on.
- It is helpful to install exterior lights that are activated by motion sensors. Burglars that are suddenly illuminated may flee.

### Windows:

- All windows should be composed of strong glass, such as laminated glass, and be in good operating order.
- Consider installing bars, grilles, grates or heavy-duty wire screening. Be aware that barred windows must be equipped with a quick-release mechanism so occupants can quickly escape during a fire.
- Windows should not be hidden by landscaping or structures. If landscaping or structures cannot be moved, lighting can be installed around the windows.

### Landscape and Yard:

- Shrubs and trees should not obscure the view of entrances. Shielded entrances can provide cover for burglars while they attempt to enter the residence.
- Fences are helpful burglar deterrents, although they should not be difficult to see through.

### While the House is Vacant:

- A loud radio can be used to make burglars think someone is home. Timers can be used to activate radios and lights to make the home appear occupied.
- A car should always be parked in the driveway. A neighbor's car can be parked there so that it appears as if someone is home.
- The lawn should be cut regularly. Uncut grass is a clue that no one is home.

### Other Tips:

- Dogs are excellent burglar deterrents. If you don't own a dog, place "Beware of Dog" signs around the yard for nearly the same effect.
- If no security system is installed, you can post security alarm stickers around the yard anyway.

In summary, **BE SAFE!!** There are plenty of things you can do to reduce the chance that your home will be burglarized. [Contact Us](#) with any questions you may have.