Residential Burglary Prevention

Burglary victims often feel vulnerable and violated when their personal space has been invaded. Residential burglaries statistically occur during the day while families are at work or school. The most common entry technique is a hard kick to the door, forcing the wooden jamb to give way. Household tools like hammers, screwdrivers, pry bars and pliers may be used to gain entry into your home.

Unfortunately, it is hard to catch burglars in the act and harder to catch them after the fact. While residential burglaries seem random in nature, there is a simple selection process. Unoccupied homes with easy or concealed access and quick escape routes are targeted. Once inside, burglars look for small expensive items that are easily traded for cash. Favorite items include cash, jewelry, laptops, CD/DVD players, game consoles, watches, guns, small electronic devices and prescription drugs. Protect yourself and make your home a less likely target with the ideas shown below.

For emergencies, call 9-1-1

Start a Neighborhood Watch group in your neighborhood

Ways to Discourage Burglars:

Bright Ideas
- Install lights by all exterior doors. Use lights at night.
- Install outside light fixtures where bulbs are hard to reach.
- Illuminate house numbers for quick emergency services response.
- Trim shrubs back from doors and windows. Don't give burglars places to hide.

Vehicle Smarts
- Close the garage door and cover windows so no one can see inside.
- Leave only the ignition key with parking lot attendants—if required.
- Hide the garage door opener from open view in your car.

Doors & Windows
- Change the locks when moving into a new residence.
- Always lock your doors and windows.
- Give your neighbor the spare key—don't hide it outside.
- Use solid core or metal exterior doors.
- Install four-screw strike plates with three-inch screws to penetrate the wood door frame.
- Use dead bolt door locks on exterior doors and double cylinder dead bolt locks if glass is within 3' of the lock.
- Add auxiliary track-type locks, removable drop bars, wooden dowels, or pinning devices to windows and sliding glass doors.
- Install peepholes on doors with 160 degree views.
- Upgrade locks to defeat bump keying.

Landscaping
- Trim tree branches 7' off the ground.
- Prune shrubs to under 3' from the ground.
- Use motion sensors and photocells on exterior floodlights.

Personal Information
- Keep valuables in a safe deposit box.
- Use a locking mailbox.
- Complete Operation ID and display the window stickers.

Dealing With Strangers
- Never let strangers enter your home.
- Verify workers by ID cards and calling their employer.
- Never give keys to workers.
- Never leave notes for anyone on the door.

While On Vacation
- Hire a house sitter.
- Ask neighbors to help with your trash bins and newspaper.
- Install a UL approved and monitored residential alarm system.
- Park a neighbor's car in your driveway.
- Use timers on indoor lights to give the impression you are home.
- Deliver merchandise to neighbor's house.

Remember this . . .

- Make safety a habit
- Security starts at the curb
- Lock your home at all times
- Create a Neighborhood Watch group

Snohomish County Sheriff's Office | Neighborhood Watch/Crime Prevention
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5|2010