

Lock a Door, Stop a Thief

Give Your Home a Fighting Chance Against Crime

Delaying a burglar for four minutes is usually enough to prevent entry into a house or apartment. It is almost impossible to make a home "crime proof"-but it is easy to make entry difficult and frustrate a burglar.

Family Habits

Home and garage doors should always be locked. Almost 50% of burglars enter homes and property through unlocked doors and windows. Use your locks.

Never leave keys outdoors. Burglars know where to find "secret" hiding places.

Every 10 seconds in the United States, a burglary is committed; don't help criminals by unlocking the door for them!

Front, Side, & Back Entrances

All doors that lead outside should be solid-core wood or metal (most hollow doors can be easily broken through). Each door should fit its frame tightly with no more than 1/8 inch clearance between the door and frame.

Locks on doors should be placed at least 40 inches away from windows, glass panels, and other openings such as mail slots and pet doors. Make it hard for a burglar to reach in and unlock your door.

Deadbolt locks provide good protection. When you turn the key, the lock mechanism slides a strong metal bolt from the door into the frame. Don't rely on chain locks, even ones with a key. An average-sized person pushing against a door can easily break most chain locks. Don't forget to have locks installed on screen doors and storm doors, as well as garage doors, cellar doors, patio doors, and any other doors that lead outside.

Install a peephole or wide-angle viewer in all entry doors that don't have windows, so that you can see who is outside without opening the door. Or use a voice communication system to identify visitors. Never open the door to anyone you do not know without first verifying the person's identity.

Burglars look for sliding glass doors because they are easy to open. Bolster any existing locks by placing a solid strip of wood (such as a broom handle) in the track of the closed door. Thieves may

also try to lift the door off its tracks. Adjust the rollers so the door cannot be lifted off and consider installing screws along the upper track of the door. Leave enough room for the door to slide, but not enough to lift the door off its tracks.

Overgrown limbs, bushes, or landscaping could block a neighbor or passerby from observing a break-in. Keep in mind that when you install a high wooden fence, you are allowing criminals who slip into your property to work unobserved.

Criminals avoid the spotlight. Porches, yards, and all entrances to your home and garage should be well lighted.

Windows

Most standard windows have a thumb-turn lock in the center. Don't rely on these locks; they can be easily pried open or reached through a broken pane. Install key locks for windows and keep the keys in a separate area. For especially vulnerable windows, consider installing grates or grilles. Make sure grates are equipped with a quick-release feature for emergency exits.

As with doors, screen and storm windows should lock from the inside.

Any second-floor windows that are accessible from porches, trellises, garage roofs, or roofs of adjoining buildings should be as secure as ground-floor windows. Just because the window is not on ground level doesn't make it inaccessible.

Other Tips

- Always lock up ladders and tools. Ask your neighbors to do the same. Don't give a burglar the resources to break into your home.
- Turn your bell on the telephone down low. If a burglar is around, he or she won't be alerted to your absence by a ringing phone.
- Use timer switches to turn on lights and a radio at appropriate times. It is an easy way to disguise the fact that you are not home.
- Did you know that one of the best alarm systems is a good watchdog? Crooks don't like noise, and a barking dog may persuade a burglar to move on.
- And, of course, the best crime prevention device around is a good neighbor. When neighbors band together, crime can be decreased.

For a free security survey of your home or business, call the Oregon Police Department at 815-732-2803 and ask for Chief Matthew Kalnins.