

How to Protect Your Home from Burglars

An economic recession affects everyone, including thieves. When money is tight, more people turn to crime and those already involved tend to get more desperate.

With more houses sitting empty due to foreclosures, once safe neighborhoods are becoming more tempting to burglars.

While installing an alarm system is your best defense, there are ways to keep your home safe from burglars without spending a lot of money. By following these simple tips for home security, in addition to exercising good old common sense, you can help make your home less susceptible to being burglarized:

- Don't advertise your recent purchases by leaving the empty boxes outside in plain view. Keep them inside your house or garage until garbage day, or better yet, immediately take them to a recycling center.
- Lock your doors and windows, whether you're there or not. Even the best locks can't protect you if you don't use them.
- Get to know your neighbors. Neighborhood Watch is the best and least expensive defense against crime.
- Never hide your spare key on your property. Leave it with a trusted friend/neighbor.
- Don't let your mail and/or newspapers pile up. If you're going to be away from home, stop delivery or ask a neighbor to pick it up for you.
- Don't put your name on your mailbox. A thief can call directory assistance, get your telephone number, and then call your home and find out you're not home. Instead, just put your house number on your mailbox.
- Install motion detector lights and/or solar or LED yard lights.
- Keep shrubs and hedges low and well-trimmed and keep tree branches trimmed. You may also want to consider, as an extra deterrent, thorny shrubs or rose bushes.
- If you park your vehicle outside of your garage, don't leave the garage door opener inside of it.
- Don't leave ladders out where they are easily accessible.
- Consider installing safety or security window film on windows that are close to door handles, or on windows that you think are especially vulnerable.
- Put lights, radios, etc. on timers with random settings.
- Keep your valuables (jewelry, etc.) locked up in a secure place (safes, etc.). Don't leave valuables in obvious places. Burglars want to get in and out as fast as they can, so make it hard for them to find anything worth taking.
- Keep a list of serial numbers of expensive items and/or etch your name and address on valuables. This makes the items harder to sell or pawn.
- Make a video record or take pictures of every room so that you have a complete record of what every room contains.