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Burglary Prevention in the Home

A burglary in your home can have a devastating affect on your feeling of safety and security.

Burglary is a crime of opportunity and removing the opportunity is the best way to prevent it. Burglars want easy access with low visibility, and they look for something worth stealing - usually something they can sell quickly for cash.

Below are some measures you can take to prevent burglaries:

Give your home the occupied look

Burglars typically don't want to perform a home invasion. They want to go into an unoccupied home, get valuable items quickly and leave without incident. Making your home look occupied is the first step in preventing a burglary. To give your home the occupied look:

- Use automatic timers on both interior and exterior lights.
- Close your window blinds at night to prevent a clear view of your belongings.
- Always park your cars in a garage. If you use your driveway, an empty driveway can signal an empty house.
- Lower the sound on your telephone and answering machine so they can't be heard outside. This is especially important for apartment and condo owners.
- Ensure high visibility of your home by pruning both bushes and lower branches of trees, as well as keeping the height of fences low.

Steps to prevent break-ins while you are away

- Doors and windows should be secured with good quality locks. Doors should have deadbolt locks with a throw of at least one inch. Consider double cylinder deadbolts (a key is required on both sides to unlock) if a window is beside the door and the thumb turn on the inside of the door can be easily reached. Keep a key accessible inside your

home in case of fire or other emergency exit is required.

- Always lock your doors and windows when you leave the house, even if only for a few minutes. It is also advisable to lock the doors when you are home, especially when you are in the backyard. Thieves have been known to enter the front door while the homeowners are in the back yard.
- Reinforce your doors and windows. Burglars will choose the easiest entry point whether it is weak door locks, poor window locks, or entry ways that are concealed from view, such as doors leading to an attached garage.
- Sliding patio doors are targets of entry. Install a patio bar or put a stick in the track of the sliding door to prevent opening.
- Exterior doors should be solid, not hollow and any glass near a door should be protected. Consideration should be given to adding a shatter proof film to the inside of the glass.
- All basement windows should have bars on the inside to prevent access. (If they are the lockable type, keep a key accessible for emergency exits).
- Don't have ladders accessible for burglars to enter windows on higher levels.
- Don't hide spare keys on the outside of your house, thieves know all the hiding spots! Leave a spare set of keys with a trusted neighbour.



Knowing your business matters.

- Leave exterior lights on as much as possible and ensure adequate lighting around your house. Consider putting lights on motion detectors with doors as the first priority and windows next.
- Install a monitored security alarm system. These systems are inexpensive and provide peace of mind.

If you are away for more than one day

- Arrange for someone to visit your home at least once per day to pick up the mail and newspapers.
- For longer periods, arrange to have the grass mowed or snow cleared, and even have a neighbour take out the garbage.
- Always communicate to neighbours when you will be away for extended periods.

Other measures you can take

- Get to know your neighbours, build a community that is willing to look out for each other. Recognizing suspicious activity begins with knowing who should be around and who shouldn't.
- Organize an Apartment or Neighbourhood Watch program and participate when needed. Communicate through phone trees to keep all neighbours informed.
- Call police immediately if you see suspicious activity or other safety concerns.

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