

Texas City Police Department



Making Your Home Secure

Burglary is one of the most widespread crimes reported in the United States and locally. There are some steps that you can take to help reduce the likelihood that your home might be a target for a burglar.

A great many burglaries are planned and carried out because the criminal has knowledge of something valuable being located in a residence. This knowledge can come from someone who has been allowed into the residence and either plans the break in or passes the information along to someone else who decides to break in. The best way to avoid this is simply don't let people inside your home unless you trust them. Take care when hiring contractors to carry out renovations or repairs, ask for references and vet them before allowing them into your home. Keep in mind that the crook is always looking or "casing" for an opportunity to steal, allowing one into your home is a bad idea.

Loose lips may sink ships, but they will also get your house burglarized. Never advertise that you are away from home for any length of time. Have a neighbor use your trash can, park a car in your driveway and pick up newspapers and mail for you. Don't leave notes on your doors; it is a dead giveaway that you're gone. Social media is another way you can invite a burglar into your home. Make posts about the vacation you just got back from, not the one you are about to leave on. Crooks do monitor social media and while your contacts may not be crooks what about their contacts, contact's, contacts and their friends?

Harden the Target:

Take steps to make your home a less attractive target for a potential burglar or thief. Simple things like keeping the shrubbery around windows and doors trimmed, having good outdoor lighting and not allowing mail or newspapers to accumulate while you're away for a few days are a good start. There are also some upgrades you can make to your home that will make it harder for the crook to carry out his plan. Here are some suggestions:

1. **Install an alarm system.** There are monitored and unmonitored systems available. The monitored systems are probably the best. Motion detectors to cover the main areas of the house should be used to supplement the window and door sensors. Keep your alarm codes to yourself.

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2. **Deadbolt Locks and Doors.** A good deadbolt makes it harder to kick in a door, but remember the deadbolt needs to be installed along with a reinforced door frame. Make sure the lock has a 1” or better bolt. Doors leading from the garage into the house should have a deadbolt as well. All exterior doors should be solid core with a peephole. The better the door and lock the more secure your home is.
3. **Secure Windows.** Lock your windows. There are even storm blinds available that will roll down and do double duty. If you have an alarm make sure the windows are on the system.
4. **Fire/Gun Safe.** There are many different sizes of safe available on the market today. If you have valuable items in your home such as jewelry, guns, cash, collectable items or anything else that can fit into a safe, then you need a safe. A fire safe is the best. Few burglars are able to “crack” a safe or carry it away when you have it bolted to the floor. It makes sense to spend a few hundred dollars to keep thousands of dollars of your property secure.
5. **Video Systems.** Here again there are a lot of different types to choose from. Some are simple recording systems while others allow you to see what is happening at home from your smart phone. If you choose one with a recorder put the recorder inside your safe, that way if the cameras are destroyed the video will be preserved. They are less expensive than you might think.
6. **Security Check.** Call your local police department and request a security check while you are gone. Give them the key holders contact information in case it’s needed.
7. **Dogs.** If you are an animal friendly person, a dog in the house can often deter a crook from wanting to come inside. Especially if the dog is of a size and breed that would make a crook think he could get bitten. No one likes to get bitten.
8. **Timers.** Setting timers throughout the day and night to turn on lights, TV’s or radios will give the appearance that someone is home if a crook is casing your house for an opportunity to break in.
9. **Tool Sheds and Out buildings.** Lock up your storage buildings. You don’t want to give the burglar the tools such as a hammer or ladder needed to break into your house.
10. **Fences.** A well placed fence that works into your homes landscaping or design can be a deterrent as well.

Other things you can do:

1. **Key Holder.** If you are away from home for a day or more have someone you trust check on your home, a neighbor or relative who can be called that has access.
2. **Neighborhood Watch.** Knowing your neighbors and looking out for each other is a good idea. Who better to know when something is out of place than a concerned neighbor? Your local police can assist with setting up a neighborhood watch program.

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3. **Records and Photos.** In case all else fails, please record serial numbers and descriptions of valuable items so the police can enter them into the computer as stolen. Engraving your name or driver's license number on them helps (don't use a social security number). Photographs of items are also helpful.
4. **Security Check.** Call your local police department and request a security check while you are gone. Give them the key holders contact information in case it's needed. **In Texas City call 409-643-5750** to request a vacation security check on your home.

The things mentioned above are suggestions to keep your home safe. This is just intended to be a starting point. No one knows your home better than you. You will have to choose what is right for you, but remember if you go to the trouble of getting alarms, locks, or other security systems, be sure to use them. That crook is just waiting for the one time you leave the garage door up or the door open. Being vigilant about your home security is a continuous concern.

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