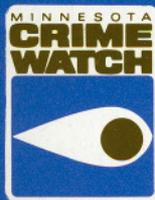


# What to do before the burglar comes



How to reduce residential burglary



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# The burglary threat

Residential burglary is a national, rapidly growing, costly and potentially dangerous crime that can lead to other crimes. When your home is burglarized you'll probably lose a radio, TV, stereo, camera or jewelry. But you'll also lose peace of mind and you could jeopardize the safety and welfare of your family.

In most cases residential burglary is a crime of opportunity committed by young amateurs able to enter your home. You can eliminate the opportunity and minimize the chance of burglary by making your home as difficult as possible to enter. All that is needed is a little time and money to take the preventive steps recommended in this booklet.

The quality hardware and preventive measures described on the following pages will deter, delay and help detect a burglar. They will increase the risk of a burglar being caught by stopping the amateur thief and slowing down the professional.

The time to install this hardware and take these steps is now — not after a burglary. But these steps are only effective if observed by each family member.

Don't forget that burglary prevention goes beyond good locks and household security. It is being a good neighbor and reporting to police any suspicious person or vehicle in your neighborhood.

This document can be made available in alternative formats by calling (612) 643-2576 (voice) or (612) 282-6555 (TTY)

Minnesota Crime Watch thanks the  
**Minnesota Crime Prevention Association**  
for its help in publishing this booklet.

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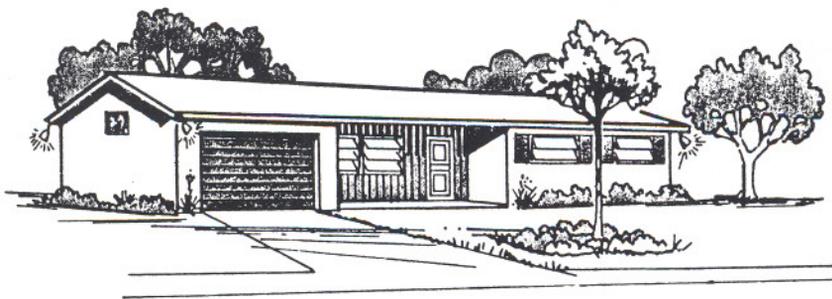
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## Home security checklist

Use this checklist to see if your home is burglary-resistant. If you answer "yes" to all questions, you have greatly reduced the chance of burglary. If you answer "no" refer to the page mentioned after the question for information about increasing security.

1. Do exterior lights illuminate your home? (Refer to page 3.)
2. Is shrubbery trimmed so a burglar can't hide near windows and doors? (Refer to page 3.)
3. Are garage doors closed and locked when not in use? (Refer to page 20.)
4. Are exterior doors made of solid hardwood? (Refer to page 4.)
5. Is there a 180° viewer in the front door? (Refer to page 5.)
6. Are sliding glass doors pinned or secured with auxiliary locks? (Refer to page 6.)
7. Are sheet metal screws inserted through the upper track of the sliding glass door frame to prevent removal of the doors? (Refer to page 6.)
8. Are deadbolt locks with a minimum one-inch throw installed on exterior doors? (Refer to page 11.)
9. Are heavy duty strike plates mounted on exterior door frames? (Refer to page 12.)
10. Are windows secured with auxiliary locks or pinned with a nail? (Refer to page 13.)
11. Do you report suspicious persons or activity to the police immediately? (Refer to page 29.)
12. Are doors locked at all times? (Refer to page 12.)
13. Are you enrolled in Operation Identification? (Refer to page 17.)

## Outside your home



Here is what you can do outside your home to make it less appealing to burglars.

- Trim shrubs so windows and doors are in full view from the street. Unobstructed doors and windows are a deterrent because the intruder is forced to work in the open where detection is likely.
- Maintain adequate lighting, especially at vulnerable entry points. Some power companies will install a yard light for a reasonable monthly charge.
- Don't leave ladders and tools laying outside where burglars can use them to enter your home.
- All valuables like lawn mowers and bicycles should be locked in your garage or shed.
- Always keep garage doors locked. This prevents burglars from entering your home through the hinged door leading from the attached garage to the house.
- House numbers should be prominently displayed and well lighted. This helps police and other emergency vehicles find your home when necessary. Urge your neighbors to display their house numbers. This will be very useful when calling to report a burglary or fire at their home.

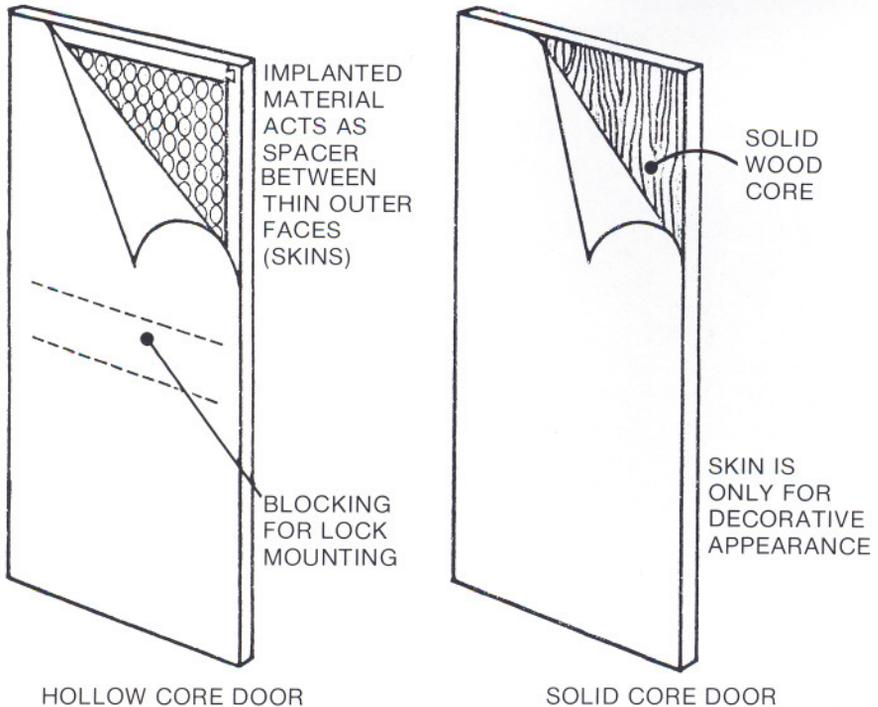
## Closing your doors to burglary

All exterior doors on houses, apartments, condominiums or mobile homes should be metal clad or solid hardwood construction. Doors of this type resist forced entry because they are not easily battered or bored.

Hollow core doors made of soft, thin wood cannot stand much battering and should not be used as exterior doors. To mount a deadbolt lock on a hollow core door compromises the security provided by these locks.

To determine if you have a solid or hollow core door, try driving a push pin into the door edge. If the pin does not go in easily, the door is solid hardwood.

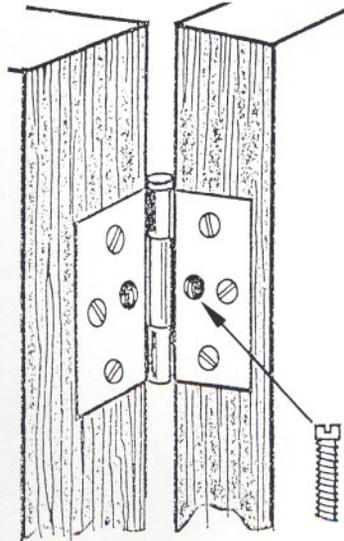
This section describes how to secure exterior doors against burglary.



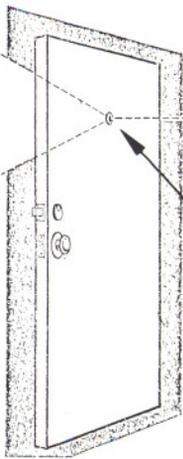
Hinged doors:

- If your home has hinged exterior doors that open outward, the hinge pins are on the outside of the home and vulnerable to attack. Unless you have nonremovable hinge pins use this simple trick to prevent a burglar from taking the door off its hinges and entering your home:

Drill two holes opposite each other in the center of both hinge plate leaves. Drive a headless screw or nail into the hole on the door frame side of the hinge plate. Leave one-half inch of the screw or nail protruding so it enters the opposite hole when the door is closed. Repeat this process for every hinge on the door. Now if a burglar removes the pins the door still cannot be taken off its hinges.



- Install a 180° wide-angle viewer in exterior doors to see who is at the door before opening it. These viewers are available from locksmiths and hardware stores.



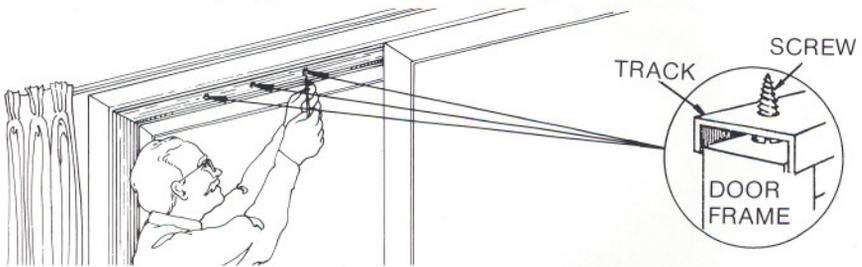
\*Always use this viewer to see who is at the door before opening it

- Do not rely on door chain latches for protection against would-be attackers. They are not security devices.

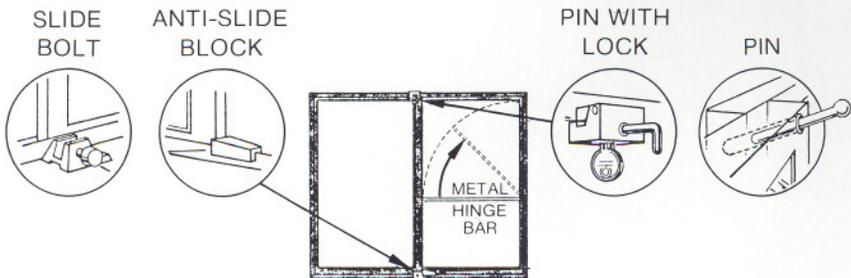
## Sliding glass doors

Burglars often enter dwellings through sliding glass doors because they can be easily forced open. To prevent forced sliding take these precautions:

- Drill a downward angled hole at the top center of the door's overlapping frames. Then insert a steel pin or heavy nail in the hole.
- Place a length of wood in the lower track. Make sure it fits snug and cannot be popped out of the track by an intruder.

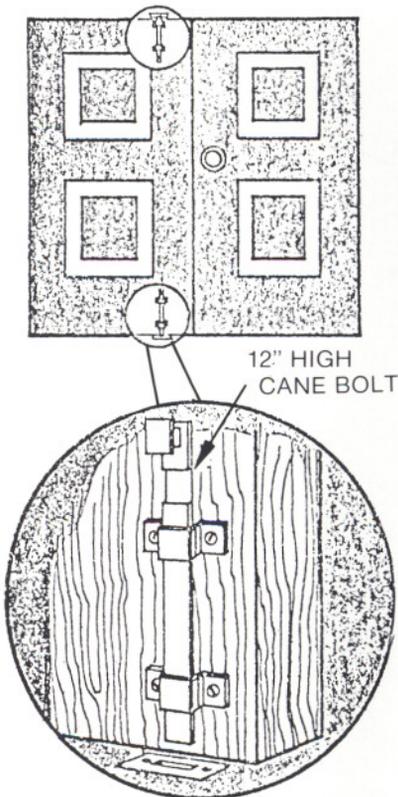
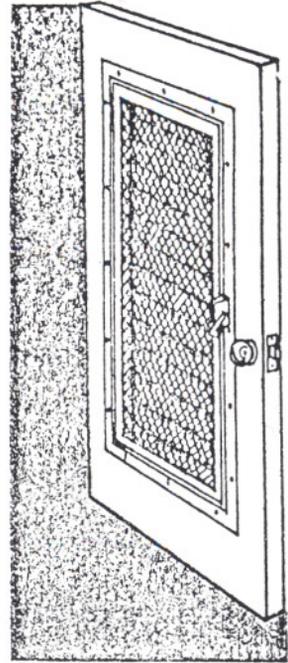


- Buy a metal bar, or Charley bar, that attaches to the side frame and folds down across the glass, bracing itself against the opposite frame. Charley bars are available from locksmiths.
- Have special locks installed on your sliding glass doors. Key operated locks using a deadbolt or pin mechanism offer the best security. Contact a locksmith for advice on the best lock to install.
- It is easy for a burglar to pry a sliding glass door from its track. To prevent this, install three, one and one-fourth inch large head sheet metal screws in the upper track of the movable door. Make sure they protrude far enough so the sliding frame just clears.



### Jalousie doors

Exterior jalousie doors are poor security risks because a burglar can easily gain entry through them. The best solution is to either replace them with solid hardwood doors or cover the inside of the door with heavy gauge expanded metal mesh. Carriage bolts should be used to attach the mesh to the door.



### Double doors

The inactive door on double doors can be secured by installing cane bolts that are one-half inch in diameter and 12 inches long. Install these bolts on the top and bottom of the door. These bolts should protrude into the floor and top of the door frame by at least three-fourths inch. The door that usually opens should have a deadbolt lock.

### **Door jambs**

Make certain the door jamb - that part of the door frame to which the door is fastened - is securely attached to studs in the house frame. Also close any wide gaps between the door and door jamb. Such gaps could be used by a burglar to pry open an exterior door or loosen a door jamb which was not securely attached to house studs.

### **Garage doors**

A case hardened padlock that is notched and locks at both ends of the shackle should secure your overhead garage door. (See padlock and hasp section.)

If your overhead garage door rolls on tracks, drill a hole in the track large enough for the shackle of the padlock. Place the padlock through the track hole so it acts as a brace against the door being opened. Steel pins can be used in place of the padlock.

- The door leading from your attached garage into your house should have a deadbolt lock mounted on it. This door is a favorite entry point because the burglar has access to your garage tools and is concealed when the garage door is closed.
- Electronic garage door openers with automatic locking devices offer good security against burglaries. Always keep the transmitter box that activates these openers in a safe place. It can be stolen and used by a burglar to open your garage door. Mark this box with your Permanent Identification Number if you are enrolled in Operation Identification. If you suspect a stranger has discovered the frequency that activates your opener, contact a dealer who sells openers to change the frequency.

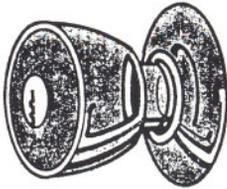
Always unplug the opener when on vacation. This is another safeguard against the garage door being opened by an intruder.

- Place translucent contact paper or curtains over garage windows. Install a yard light that can be turned on from inside the garage. A well lighted yard offers security as you go from garage to house at night. You should also be able to turn the yard light on from inside the house.

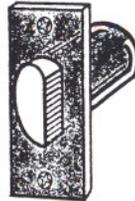
## Locking out trouble

This section describes locks and security hardware that can protect against home burglaries. Hardware meeting the minimum technical requirements listed here could also protect your family from burglary-related injuries.

- The key-in-knob or spring latch lock is used most often in dwellings. Its spring-activated strike has a bevelled edge and can be easily defeated when a credit card or screwdriver is wedged between it and the strike plate. This lock offers little security.



KEY-IN-KNOB



SPRING LATCH LOCK

The dead latch is similar to the spring latch but has a bar on the strike that cannot be easily defeated. It offers little security because the bar is very short and weak.

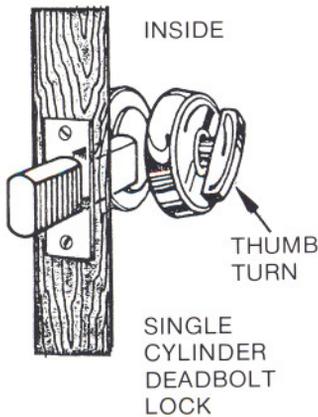
Both lock types should be supplemented by deadbolt locks or rim type locks.



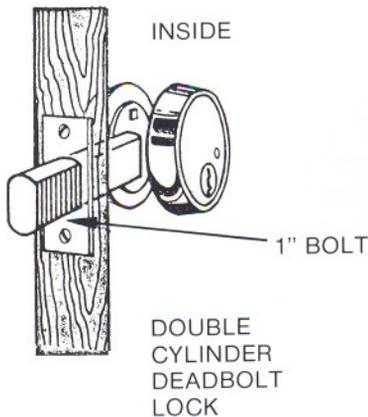
DEAD LOCKING LATCH

- The deadbolt lock has a bolt that must be activated by a key or thumb turn. It offers good security because it is not spring activated and cannot be opened by a credit card. For this reason it is best to install deadbolt locks on solid hardwood exterior doors. Either of these two types of deadbolt locks should be installed.

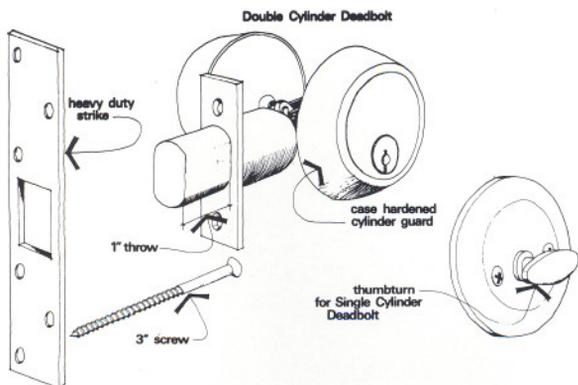
The single cylinder deadbolt is activated with a key on the exterior side of the door and a thumb turn piece on the other side. Install this lock where there is no breakable glass within 40 inches of the thumb turn piece. Otherwise a burglar can break the glass, reach inside and turn the thumb piece.



The double cylinder deadbolt is key activated on both sides of the door. It should be installed where there is glass within 40 inches of the lock.



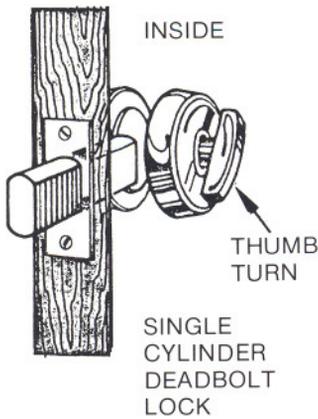
The double cylinder deadbolt lock can hinder escape from a burning home. So always leave a key in or near the lock when someone is home. Children should know the location of this key and how to operate the lock. When no one is home keep the key out of the reach of any burglar who might break the glass near the lock. Double cylinder deadbolt locks are only permitted in existing single-family homes, townhouses and first floor duplexes used exclusively as residential dwellings.



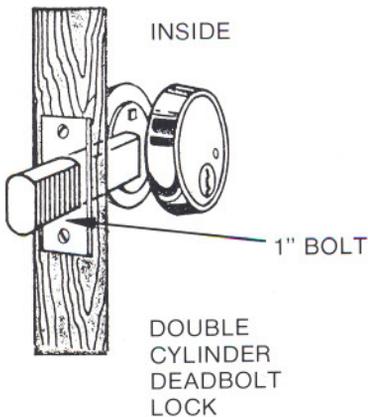
Both single and double cylinder deadbolt locks should meet these criteria to be a good security device:

- The bolt must extend a minimum of one inch and be made of case hardened steel or contain a hardened insert.
- The cylinder guard must be tapered, round and free spinning to make it difficult to grip with a pliers or wrench. It must be solid metal - not hollow casting or stamped metal.
- There should be at least a five-pin tumbler system or equivalent locking device.
- The connecting screws that hold the lock together must be on the inside and made of case hardened steel. No exposed screw heads should be on the outside
- The connecting screws must be at least one-fourth inch in diameter and go into solid metal stock, not screw posts.

The single cylinder deadbolt is activated with a key on the exterior side of the door and a thumb turn piece on the other side. Install this lock where there is no breakable glass within 40 inches of the thumb turn piece. Otherwise a burglar can break the glass, reach inside and turn the thumb piece.



The double cylinder deadbolt is key activated on both sides of the door. It should be installed where there is glass within 40 inches of the lock.



# Securing your windows

This section describes how to secure different types of home windows against burglary.

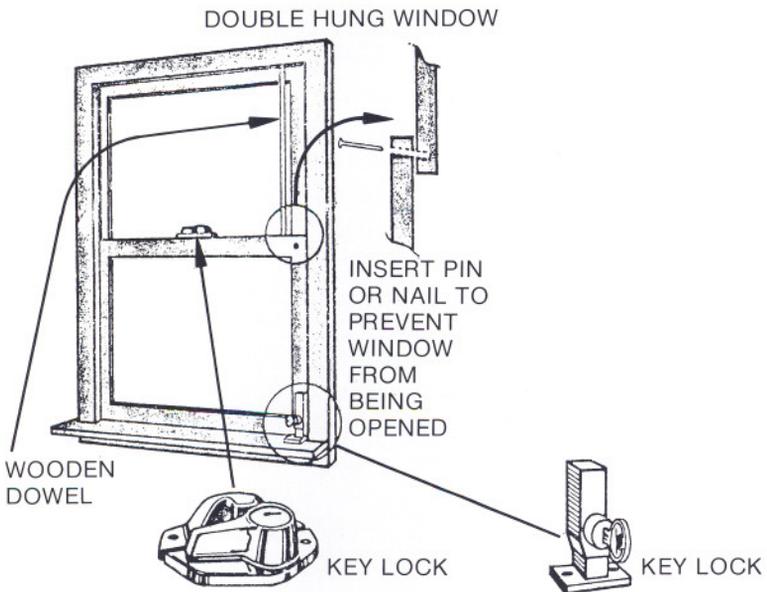
## Double hung windows ...

are easily jimmied or pried open. These windows can be secured by taking these simple, inexpensive precautions:

- Drill a hole at a downward angle through the first sash and into but not through the second sash. Then pin the window by driving a nail into the hole. Pinning braces the window against prying. More holes can be drilled to pin the window open for ventilation.
- Keyed locks offering effective protection are available for windows. These inexpensive, easy-to-install locks should replace thumb turn locks that offer little security.

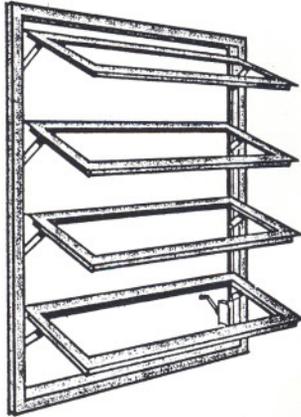
**Master key all window locks and show children how to use them. Do not use keyed locks on windows in sleeping areas.**

- A stick or wood dowel can be wedged between the top and bottom portions of the window. The dowel can be fastened to the inside of the window with hook and loop material. This allows it to be shortened for window ventilation.



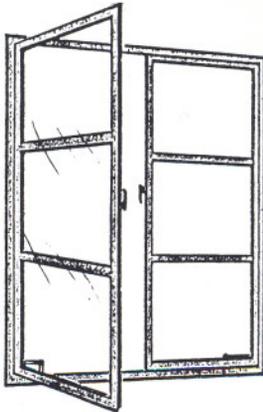
**Awning type windows ...**

are hard to secure. But it is possible to provide security by tightly closing them and removing the operator handle. Keep the handle handy for emergencies.



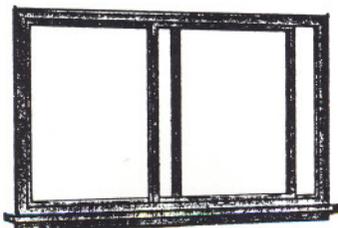
**Casement windows ...**

provide good security. Make sure the cranking mechanism works properly and that there is no excess play between window and frame. To add more security remove the operator handle and store in a convenient place. Now if someone breaks the glass it will be difficult to reach inside and crank open the window.



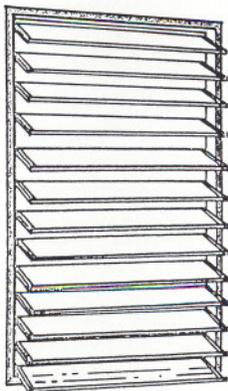
**Sliding glass windows ...**

are secured the same way as sliding glass doors. (See section on doors.) Inexpensive auxiliary locks are available from locksmiths and hardware stores.



**Jalousie windows ...**

are a high security risk and should be replaced with another type of window offering more security. If replacement is impossible, install metal grating on the outside of the window. The grating should have a quick release feature for use in emergencies.



**Security Glazing ...**

Burglary-resistant glass and other transparent materials which are shatter-resistant and virtually unbreakable can be installed to replace window and door glass. These materials can give extra security against forced entry.

Contact a local glass company for advice on the best material for your home.

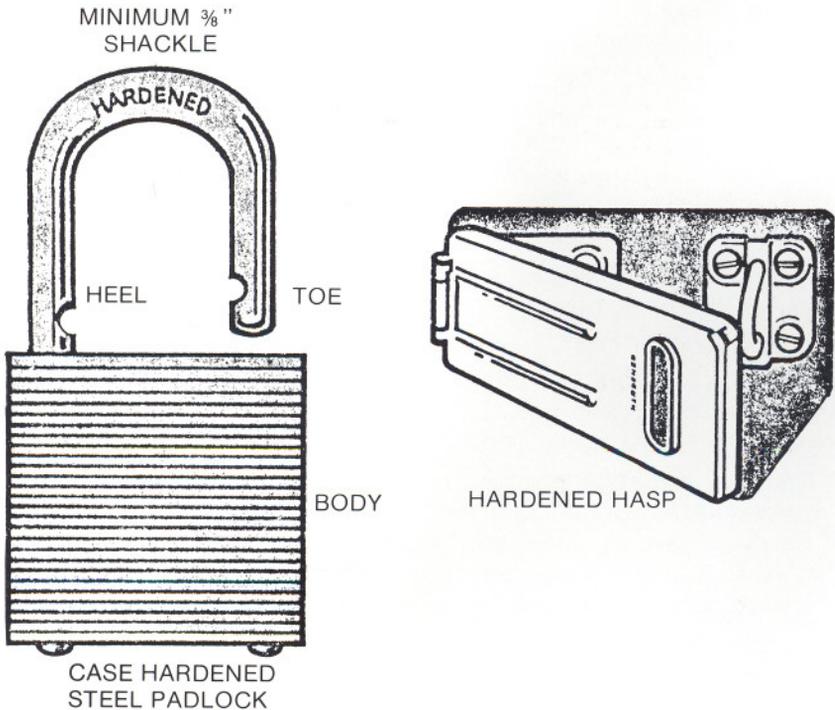
## Padlocks and hasps

Padlocks should be made of case hardened steel and have a heavy body construction. The shackle should be at least three-eighths inch in diameter and have a locking mechanism, or notch, on the heel and toe.

The padlock should have a five-pin tumbler system or equivalent locking device.

File off any key number stamped on the bottom end of the padlock. This number should be recorded elsewhere to eliminate the possibility of unauthorized key duplication.

Hasps should be of case hardened steel and have no screws or bolts visible when attached to doors. Case hardened screws to hold the hasp in place should be as long as possible. Carriage bolts with fender washers should be used to install hasps on metal doors.



# Operation Identification



Operation Identification is a proven program to help you and law enforcement agencies reduce burglaries. It costs nothing to join the program. Here is how it works:

- Mark all easily stolen property with your Permanent Identification Number (PIN). Your local police or sheriff's department will assign a PIN to you and keep a record of it in their files. They'll also provide an engraving tool to mark your property.
- The PIN is a nationally recognized number. All recovered property marked with it will be traced and returned to you — even if recovered in another state.
- Make a record of all marked property and keep it in a safe deposit box or other safe location away from valuables. You'll get a record form with your PIN.
- The form lets you record the PIN as well as descriptions and serial numbers of marked items. This information will help you identify stolen property quickly and make it more recoverable.
- Take photographs or make a video taped record of household property to aid identification and recovery of lost or stolen property.
- Put Operation Identification stickers on windows near front and back doors of your home. They tell a burglar that property is identified as yours and will be hard to sell to a dealer of stolen goods. (No dealer wants to be arrested with stolen articles — especially if they are easy to trace and identify.) The police or sheriff's department will give you these stickers.

- The burglar also knows that marked stolen property in possession is court evidence of guilt.

**Mark these possessions with your PIN:**

TV sets	Binoculars
Stereo equipment	Guns
Radios	Hub caps
Car tape decks	Mag wheels
Recorders & players	Lawn mowers
Fishing rods, reels	Snow blowers
Vacuum cleaners	Bicycles
Kitchen appliances	Outboard motors
Typewriters	Golf clubs
Calculators	Electric shavers
Cameras	Tools
Watches and clocks	

What makes Operation Identification so effective is that PIN-marked property is hard for a burglar to sell. Marked property can also be easily traced and is solid evidence of possession of stolen property.

Operation Identification is only successful if you mark your property **and** display the window stickers.

## While away from home



During vacations or other trips, follow these tips to make your home appear occupied. They will discourage burglaries.

• **Ask a trusted neighbor to:**

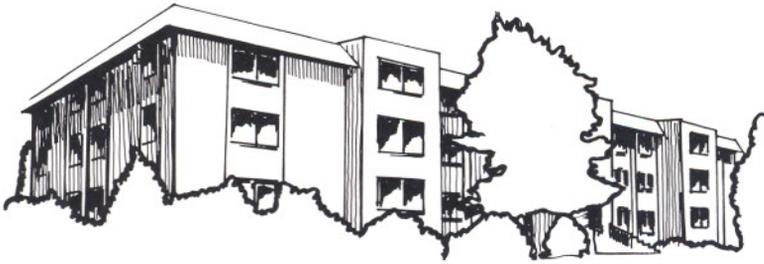
- park in your driveway or in front of your home
- occasionally place garbage in your garbage can
- mow the lawn or shovel sidewalks
- check your home for anything unusual
- pick up your mail and newspapers. Never tell the newspaper carrier that you will be gone. Cancel the paper rather than entering a "vacation stop".

- Either use automatic timers or recruit a trusted neighbor to turn lights on at dusk and off at your bedtime. Vary the lights to be turned on and occasionally have a radio turned on. Never leave lights or the radio on constantly.
- Leave your drapes in the normal position. Have a neighbor close them at night, open them at daylight and reposition them every day or so.
- Set the bell on your telephone on low. A loudly ringing unanswered phone is a sure sign no one is home. If you have portable phone service remove the phone from the wall. Once this is done the phone's bell will not ring.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked so no one can see your car is gone or other equipment in your garage.

**Also:**

- Tell a neighbor where you can be reached in an emergency.
  - Don't let your travel plans be widely known.
  - Tell police about your plans. Most police departments will gladly keep an eye on your house when you are gone.
  - Consider joining a neighborhood awareness program (See page 24 for details.)
  - Always lock doors and windows when you leave home — even for a few minutes.
-

## Securing your apartment or condominium



**These tips can make your home more burglary-resistant.**

- All exterior doors should be checked for adequate security.
- After moving in, ask the management to have a licensed locksmith rekey all exterior door locks in your home.
- Deadbolt locks should be installed on exterior doors. Do not master key these locks to management keys because that defeats the purpose of these locks. If necessary, keys in sealed envelopes should be given to managers for emergency use only.
- Secure all sliding glass doors and windows regardless which floor you live on. (See page 6 for details.)
- Always lock your doors and windows when you leave home — even for a few minutes.
- Demand adequate lighting for stairwells, laundry rooms, parking lots and the building's exterior.
- Have shrubs trimmed so they can't conceal burglars or attackers.
- When taking vacations or trips tell trusted neighbors of your plans and where you can be reached. Have newspapers and mail picked up. Stop other deliveries.
- Be cautious of door-to-door solicitors who want to give you something for nothing.
- Women living alone should only use their first initial with their last name on mail boxes and for telephone listings.
- Elevators are potential places for assault. If the building has an elevator, make sure the ground floor elevator lobby is well lighted and visible from the street or manager's office. Before entering an elevator see who is already on board. Don't get on if a person already on looks suspicious.

## Securing your mobile home



Some mobile homes are more difficult to secure than other types of housing. These tips help make mobile homes as secure as possible:

- Exterior door hinges should be properly pinned. (See section on closing your door to burglary.)
- Reinforce all exterior doors and fit them with auxiliary deadbolt locks. Secure metal framing around the strike plate by installing screws over and under the strike. This will make the frame virtually tamperproof.
- Exterior jalousie doors should be replaced either by solid wood core doors or covered from the inside with heavy gauge expanded metal mesh. The mesh should be fastened with carriage bolts.
- Install either a burglar alarm system or inexpensive door alarms. (Ask your police or sheriff for a copy of the Minnesota Crime Watch booklet, "Burglar Alarms: Do You Need One?")
- Doors to utility sheds should be reinforced from the inside with plywood covering the entire door. Then use carriage or stove bolts to fasten a case hardened hasp to the door. Secure the hasp with a quality padlock (see padlock and hasp section).
- Bicycles, lawn mowers and other equipment kept in the shed should be secured to the building's frame by cable or chain locks.
- Establish a Neighborhood Watch program to deter burglary in your mobile home community. (See section on Block Watch Clubs and Neighborhood Watch.)

# Home security surveys

## Lights

Flood lights at exterior doors and over the garage are recommended. Use timers on interior lights when not at home.

## Sliding glass doors

can be easily forced by a burglar. These doors can be secured with a Charley bar, by pinning or with simple but effective locks.

## Windows

Glass is most vulnerable to attack. But, many burglars are reluctant to break windows because windows are often visible from the street or from neighboring dwellings. Windows hidden from view must be securely protected!

## Garages

should be secured because:

1. They often contain ladders and tools to help a burglar.
2. Attached garages provide visual cover for a burglar.

## Door locks

Quality deadbolt locks with a minimum one-inch throw are recommended. These locks should be mounted so one cannot open the door after breaking a window. Mounting the lock low on the door can sometimes eliminate this problem. In other cases, a double cylinder lock will solve the problem.

## House number

should be clearly displayed front and back.

## Exterior doors

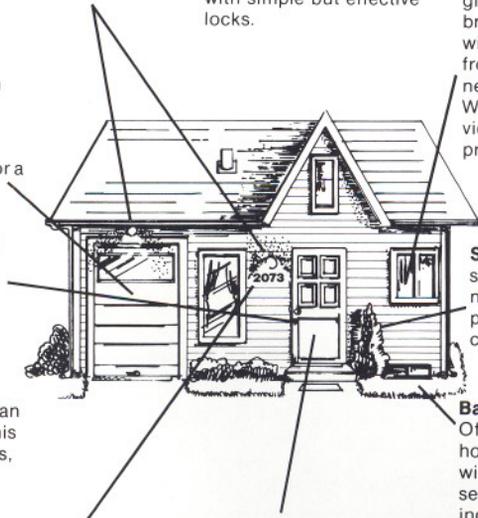
Solid core hardwood doors with rugged frames that cannot spread apart with a pry bar are recommended.

## Shrubs

should be trimmed so as not to block possible points of entry or conceal a potential attacker.

## Basement windows

Often overlooked by homeowners, basement windows should be secured to prevent forcing. Window locks should not be vulnerable if the glass is broken. Screening materials can be used effectively on these window wells or on window framing.



The home security survey is designed to show citizens where their homes are vulnerable to forced entry. Locks are checked, windows inspected and security weaknesses identified during the survey. Information gathered shows which steps to take to make homes more burglary-resistant.

Ask your local police or sheriff's department to conduct a survey of your home. It is also possible for neighborhood groups to organize and conduct surveys of their own homes. But the group must be trained by officers in the proper use of survey forms before surveys can be conducted.

Some areas examined in the survey are illustrated here. This diagram also reviews points made in previous sections of this booklet.

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## **Block Watch Clubs and Neighborhood Watch**

Block Watch Clubs and Neighborhood Watch are concepts concerned citizens can use to help reduce crime in their neighborhood. **The objective is to have neighbors watch for emergencies or unusual behavior and report them to the police.**

Block Watchers are trained by police to identify and report suspicious or criminal behavior. Neighborhood Watch is similar to Block Watch Clubs but may also implement a complete program of home security surveys and Operation Identification.

To organize a Block Watch Club or a Neighborhood Watch program, contact your police or sheriff's department. A crime prevention officer will meet with you and your neighbors to discuss these concepts in detail.

## **Summer Cabin Protection**

An extension of Operation Identification is the Home Identification Card program for people with summer cabins who usually don't occupy them during the winter months. These remotely located cabins are easy targets for burglary or vandalism and the Home Identification Card protects against these crimes. Each card helps law enforcement officers locate you or someone checking on your cabin if it is burglarized or vandalized.

A Home Identification Card provides space for the owner's name, their Operation Identification number, a winter phone number where they can be reached and a local person who can be contacted if the property is broken into. Each card is filled out by the property owner and affixed to the right side of the refrigerator.

The Home Identification Card serves a warning to would-be burglars that the property is marked and can be identified. Should a card-equipped home be burglarized, authorities locate the card and use the inscribed information to contact the owner.

Home Identification Cards are free and available from police and sheriff departments.

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## Fish House Crime Watch

Crime is on the increase, and our peaceful Minnesota lakes are not immune. These lakes become small towns filled with thousands of fish houses every winter. The average fish house is equipped with \$300 - \$500 or more in sporting goods and personal property. A criminal must have the *ability* to enter your fish house, the *desire* to steal or vandalize, and the *opportunity*. You can minimize all three of these factors by undertaking security measures, marking your property with Operation Identification stickers, and taking as much of your property as possible away from the fish house when it is not in use.

Some physical security measures that will help include using a strong steel hasp that covers the screws; using either a shankless padlock or one with a 7/16" shank to prevent cutting; mounting the door hinges inside or using hinge pins; installing a deadbolt lock and reinforcing the frame and strike plate; and assuring windows are covered with cloth and small enough to prevent a thief from crawling through.

Communicate with your fishing neighbors and nearby homeowners and agree to watch out for one another's property. It is also important to know where the nearest phone is located and to use it to report suspicious activity *while it is occurring*.

## Burglar Alarms

Residential burglar alarms are not universal solutions to home burglary. They are not substitutes for locked doors and windows or for other precautions your police department can suggest.

**It may be appropriate to obtain alarm protection if you:**

- live in an isolated area,
- are absent from home for considerable periods of time,
- live in a high crime area,
- keep many valuables in your home (a practice which is not recommended).

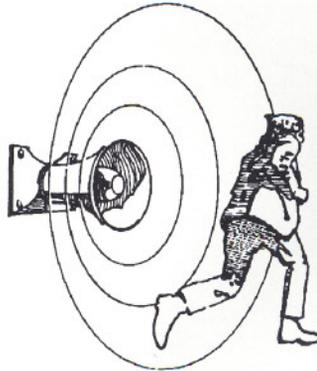
**The purpose of an alarm system is to:**

- deter potential intruders (most burglars would reconsider forced entry if they knew an alarm system was in operation).
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- warn occupants that an intruder is present.
- alert police in order to apprehend the burglar.

To accomplish these objectives, alarms must complete an operation cycle consisting of sensing, signalling and response. Sensing and signalling are mechanical aspects of the alarm system, while response is a human interaction with the system.

The sensing cycle involves a series of electronic components designed to establish a secure perimeter, space or point. The alarm emits a signal if an intruder enters the space. The signal can either sound at the site (local alarm) or at some remote location, or both.



Who will receive the alarm signal and the expected response are important design considerations. Alarms must have an on-site signal if they are to alert occupants. But if a house is in an isolated area, it makes little sense to depend solely on a local alarm to alert neighbors or scare off the intruder. In this case, a remote signal is also needed. The remote signal alarm is constantly monitored. Any time the alarm is activated, the police or sheriff will be notified. The most dependable alarm system operates on household power with emergency battery power.

It is a good idea to have at least one smoke detector built into an alarm system. Smoke is the primary killer in a fire and a smoke detector placed in hallways between bedrooms can save lives. Check to see if your community requires smoke detectors in homes.

For more information about burglar alarms, ask your police or sheriff's department for the Minnesota Crime Watch booklet, "Burglar Alarms: Do You Need One?"

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## **Alarm Purchasing Guidelines**

Will an activated alarm shut off after 10 to 15 minutes and reset if attacked again? Will an exposed control box activate the alarm when attacked? Are wires connecting system elements protected?

Will an electronically activated alarm switch to emergency battery power without activating the signal? Can the alarm's time delay turn the system off and on without tripping the signal?

Is a local alarm loud enough to attract attention? Is a remote signal handled by a person or tape recording? (Some alarm-activated calls for help cannot be made by taped message.)

Will an alarm company representative who can open the building respond to a commercial alarm? Does the alarm company offer round-the-clock service in case of false alarms? Will the company help you get reduced insurance premiums if you install their system?

Is the alarm system approved by Underwriters Laboratories? Is the alarm company an established business community member? (Check its reputation by calling the Better Business Bureau.) Investigate the experience of the company's installation crew.

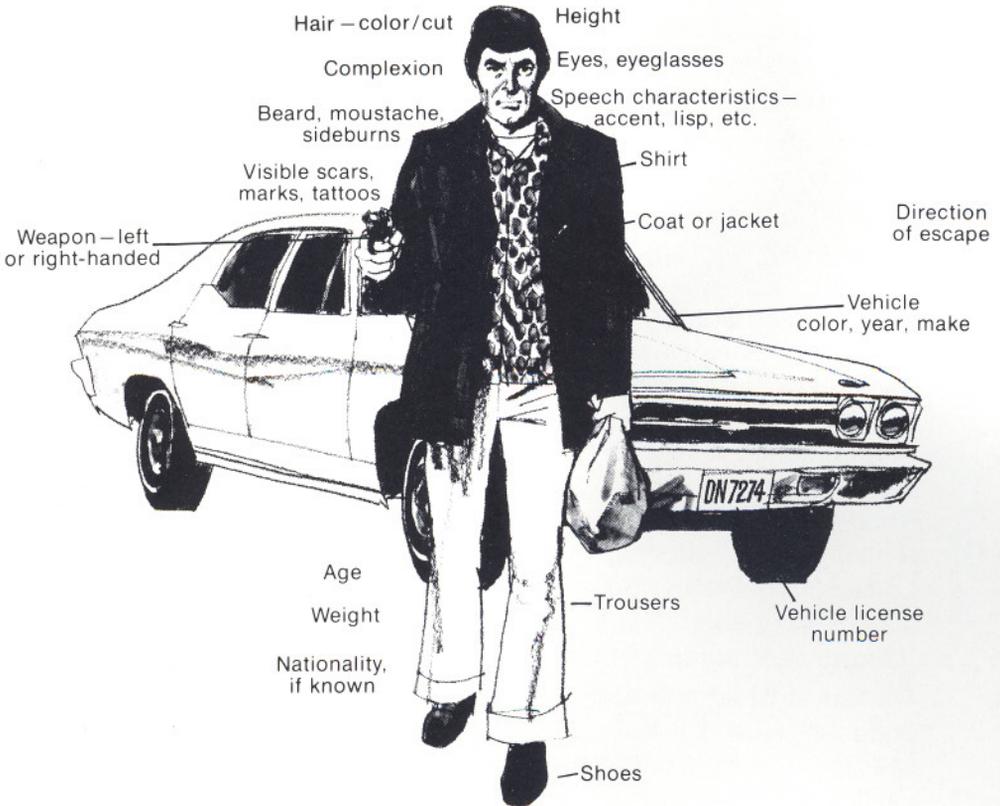
Ask the alarm company for their warranty and contract. Make sure the contract lists all protection points, itemizes equipment to be installed and provides for continuing service. Ask for the company's written appraisal of your security needs.

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# Suspect identification

If you see or are confronted by a burglar, take note of everything you can ... the suspect's size, weight, build, dress, speech, abnormalities and method and direction of escape. Here is a chart to help you know what to look for. Report this information to the police.

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION



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## Reporting suspicious activities

Here is a list of suspicious activities which should be reported to police. The list is not intended to be complete. Use your own judgment when reporting other suspicious activities.

- Someone trying to enter a neighbor's home by a window or side door
- A strange car left running and parked on your street
- Someone shouting HELP, FIRE or RAPE
- Shots, alarms, or windows being broken
- Someone tampering with a neighbor's car
- Someone with a weapon
- Someone entering or leaving a business before or after hours
- Someone carrying items of value from a neighbor's home
- Someone who appears to be moving household items late at night

When reporting a crime use the correct terms. You'll get better service from the police because they will know what to expect when they arrive. Here are some definitions of common crimes:

**Burglary** is when one enters a structure illegally with the intention of committing a serious crime (like stealing something or hurting someone).

**Robbery** is taking another's property by force or the threat of force. It involves confrontation with the offender.

**Larceny** is stealing something without force or entry (like pick-pocketing or shoplifting).

**Vandalism** is the destruction or defacing of property.

**Assault** is when one hurts or tries to hurt another.

**Sexual Assault** is when a person is forced into sexual activity he or she does not want to be involved in or is under the age of consent (sexual assault is not just rape).

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## **Follow these steps when reporting a crime to police**

Remain calm.

Call the police emergency number.

Identify yourself and give your location.

Describe what's happening or what you saw happen.

Describe the suspect or suspects. (See the suspect identification chart).

Describe one thing at a time, simply and clearly. This will make your report much clearer to the person taking the call.

Be patient. Answer all questions. Help may be on the way even before you're through answering questions.

Stay on the line until all the police dispatcher's questions have been answered.

## **Additional crime prevention tips**

Never leave notes outside your home which could let a burglar know it is unoccupied.

Lock the front door when working in the back yard. Lock the back door when working in the front.

Don't hide keys under the doormat or anywhere outside.

Rekey all exterior locks when moving into a new home.

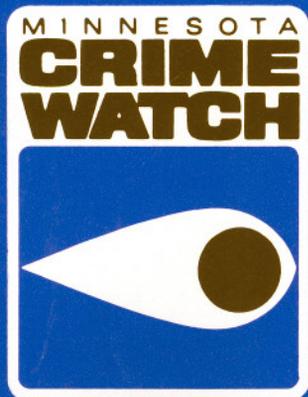
Do not allow children to open doors to strangers.

Never automatically open your door when someone knocks or rings the doorbell. Use the 180° viewer to check the person's identification and business. If in doubt call the company to check the authenticity of identification.

If someone comes to your door asking to use your phone for an emergency, offer to make the call for them. Don't let them in your house.

Place your police or sheriff department's emergency phone number near your telephone.

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**Minnesota Department of Public Safety**