

10 ways to crime-proof your home

- Lock your doors and windows especially when leaving your home.
- Always try to see who's there *before* opening your door. Look through a peephole or a safe window. Ask any stranger to tell you his or her name and to show proof that he or she is from the identified company or group.
- Don't tag your keys with your name or address.
- Don't keep spare keys in mailboxes, under mats, on top of doorframes or in planters. Burglars know all the "good" spots. Give a spare key to a trusted neighbor instead.
- Don't leave notes on your mailbox or your door.
- Illuminate as much of your property as you can and make sure all outside lights (porches, etc) are working and functional.
- Get involved with a neighborhood watch group. Working closely with your neighbors to spot trouble is one of the most effective ways to prevent crime.
- When gone on vacation or an extended amount of time try to make your home look lived in. Leave the blinds open in their usual position. Install automatic timers to turn lights and radios on and off at appropriate times. Lower the sound of your telephone and answering machine, so it can't be heard outside the home. Make sure your voice mail message doesn't imply that you are away on vacation. Stop delivery of mail (or have a neighbor take it in every day), newspapers, milk, etc.
- Make sure that locks, doors, and windows are strong and cannot be broken easily. Secure each outside door with a dead-bolt lock, and sliding doors with a cut-off broom handle placed in the inside track, with a Charley bar or with a spring loaded latching device designed for this purpose.
- All foundation shrubs and trees should be kept low trimmed, so as not to provide cover and camouflage for a burglar.