

10 Basic Security Tips

1. Crooks will look for the vulnerable home: the one without deadbolt locks, one with an open door, a broken window, or one without a home security system.
2. Be sure you have quality secure deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. There are huge differences between the \$9.99 lumber center special of the week and a quality secure deadbolt. Consider "high security" hardware for your home. Besides being very high quality and very secure, most feature some method of key control that requires you to give specific permission for anyone to obtain duplicate keys.
3. Remember who has copies of the keys to your home. Have your locks rekeyed if keys are lost or stolen. If you recently moved in, have all door locks rekeyed or changed as soon as possible.
4. Be sure to draw the shades and leave a radio or television on when no one is home. Install timer controlled lighting. Ask a neighbor to park a car in your driveway.
5. Always request identification from service or utility workers. Potential thieves don't always look like "thugs".
6. At night, keep your garage and the path to your home well lit. Trim the landscaping and make sure there are no areas for someone to easily hide.
7. To avoid being surprised, look around and make sure that no one followed you into the garage before stepping out of your car.
8. Get involved in Neighborhood Watch programs. They work! Get to know your neighbors. Report suspicious people to the police.

9. Keep an up to date inventory of major possessions, include price, date, description, receipt, and picture or video if possible, mark your drivers license number on them. Keep this record in your fire safe, if this is a video record, do not keep in fire safe, unless it is rated for media storage. Keep a copy away from home, such as with a family member or in a bank deposit box. These steps will help police identify your property if stolen, and will also help establish ownership for insurance purposes.

10. If you use an answering machine, do not tell callers that you are not at home in the message, instead say you can't come to the phone right now. Avoid using messages such as "This is Miss Jones...." Use a message like "You have reached 123-4567...." instead.

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