

HOME SECURITY CHECKLIST

Is your home likely to attract a potential burglar?



Is the security in your home sufficient to frustrate a potential thief or increase their chances of being caught? This Home Security Checklist was developed to give you an indication of the level of security in your home. Review this list to learn how a little time, effort and money can greatly improve your peace of mind.

OUTSIDE HOME

- Are there clear views of all windows and doors?**

The more private an area is, the more likely it is to attract the attention of a criminal. Trim trees and shrubs that block sight lines to your windows and doors.

- During the evening is there visible interior or exterior lighting that gives the impression that you are home, even if you're not?**

Install outside lighting to eliminate dark areas around doors or windows. Use motion lights with a low intensity feature as an alternative to bright constant level lighting.

DOORS

- Do all of your exterior doors have a deadbolt with at least a one-inch throw?**

Criminals with tools easily defeat conventional key in the knob locks. Deadbolts should be installed on all exterior doors.

- Are the screws that secure your entry doors and strike plates at least 2½ inches long?**

Most door installations use screws less than 1" in length. This results in a door that appears secure but is relatively weak and easily prone to being kicked in. Door kick break-ins to homes are becoming common. To secure a door properly the screws should be at least 2½ to 3½ inches long.

- Have you taken steps to reinforce any windows located in or next to doors?**

Glass within 40 inches of a door lock can be broken and a criminal can reach inside to unlock the door. The security of windows at the sides of doors can be improved by adding a polycarbonate window film.

- Is there a convenient way of clearly seeing who is at your door without opening it?**

Every entrance door should have a convenient way of clearly seeing who is there without opening it. For most doors this will require the installation of a wide-angle lens peephole or door scope. This will allow you to keep your door locked while assessing the visitor prior to opening the door. Chain locks should not be used as a security device as they can easily be broken. If you have a screen door, by leaving it locked you could open the main door so that you could still converse with any person at your door while still maintaining some security. A locked screen door also provides additional security to any door.

SLIDING DOORS

- If you have a sliding door, do you have screws in the top of the track to prevent the door from being lifted out when in the closed and locked position?**

There is a 1" gap at the top of sliding doors, which allows them to be lifted in and out of their tracks. The addition of 3 flat-headed wood screws in the upper track of the doors in the closed position will prevent criminals from lifting them out.

- If you have a sliding door, do you have either a hockey stick or wooden dowel in the bottom track or have you installed a security bar to prevent the door from being opened?**

GARAGE DOORS

- Do you always close and lock your garage door?**

Thefts from garages are one of the most common yet easily prevented crimes. Keep garage doors closed and locked. Keep ladders in the garage.



WINDOWS

- Do the windows on your home have a pin or secondary after-market locking device in case the normal window lock is pried and defeated?**

Most window locks are easily broken. Criminals target sliding windows and double hung windows are easy to jimmy open.

To prevent quiet entry, drill a downward sloping hole through the top of the bottom sash and into (but not through) the bottom of the top sash. Insert a pin or nail in this hole to prevent the opening of either sash. Casement windows usually have secure latches. Make sure your latches are strong and tight fitting.

BASEMENT WINDOWS

- Are your basement windows pinned or do you have a wooden dowel in the track of the window?**

Basement windows are the preferred entry point for break and enters to homes. Extra security should be used on them. The most effective and aesthetically pleasing way to secure basement windows is to replace them with a polycarbonate window film. Security bars are also available specifically for basement windows. It is important that you make sure that any security bars you install in your home have an escape feature in the event of a fire.

VALUABLES

- Do you limit your exposure to risk by storing valuables in the basement or keep them in a safety deposit box?**

Criminals know all the hiding spots on the first and second floor. The best place to put valuables is in a safety deposit box. Otherwise a good alternative is to hide valuables in a lock box in a general storage area of the basement. Criminals tend to spend a minimal amount of time there.

- Have you marked all valuables with an engraver and posted Operation Identification stickers on your windows and doors to deter theft and assist in the recovery of goods in the event they are lost or stolen?**

Marked property is an effective deterrent against break and enters. See the "Operation Identification" tip sheet for details on this program.

WHEN AWAY

- When you are away from home do you leave lights on timers both inside and outside the home?**

Timers make a home look lived in and will potentially avoid leaving your home in darkness or leaving the outside lights on during the day.

- Do you have a trusted neighbour or friend pick up your mail, newspapers and flyers when away for more than a day?**

The accumulation of mail, newspapers and flyers is a sure sign that nobody's home. Avoid sending the wrong message to burglars.

- Have you made arrangements to have your lawn cut and your snow shoveled when you go away?**
- If you have an answering machine, do you leave a message that leaves the impression you are home?**

Never leave a message that says you're not home.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on securing property please visit the Safeguard Ontario Property Security Program internet page and review the Ontario Home Security Audit Guide.

