

What to do **Before** the **Burglar** Comes



Minnesota
BCA
Bureau of Criminal Apprehension





What is Identity Theft?

Identity theft occurs when someone steals your personal information, credit cards, checks, or driver’s license and uses that information to obtain credit or merchandise in your name.

How Does Identity Theft Happen?

Everyday transactions require you to share your personal information such as your name, address, and phone numbers, bank and credit card account numbers, and your Social Security number. Thieves may have access to this information through their employer.

- Purses and wallets may be stolen.
- Mail may be stolen including new check orders, bank and credit card statements, and pre-approved credit offers.
- Your trash may be rummaged through for personal information.
- Fraudulent telephone solicitors may contact you.

What Should I Do If It Happens?

- Contact your local police department **as soon as possible**. Most fraudulent use of cards or checks takes place within days of being lost or stolen.
- Contact the fraud departments of the three major credit bureaus **as soon as possible**. Ask that a “fraud alert” be placed on your name and Social Security number immediately so hopefully law enforcement will be contacted if a business checks with the credit bureau. This will also show up if you use your accounts without changing them, so you may wish to carry a copy of the police report with you to minimize credit hassles for yourself.
- Contact the credit departments **as soon as possible** about any accounts that have been tampered with or opened fraudulently.
- Contact the postal service **as soon as possible** if you think your mail has been stolen.

Keep a list of phone numbers handy for all credit cards and financial institutions you may need quickly if your purse or wallet is stolen, including account numbers and expiration dates. If you

have been the victim of an identity theft, check your criminal history to clear up any arrest or conviction records in your name caused by someone using your name as an alias.

What Can I Do to Reduce My Risk of Identity Theft?

- Before you reveal any personal identifying information, determine why it is needed by the person requesting it. Ask if you can choose to have it kept confidential.
- Cancel unused credit cards.
- Do not give up your Social Security number unless absolutely necessary.
- Be cautious when using bank ATMs or public phones. Make long distance calls so that the number you are using cannot be observed by others in the area.
- Check your credit reports at least once a year.
- Sign the back of new credit cards as soon as you get them. Destroy unwanted cards.

Protect Your Mail from Theft?

- Install a locked mailbox at your residence.
- Do not leave paid bills in your mailbox for pickup.
- Have your mail held by the post office if you will be away from home.

If Your Social Security Card Was Taken

- Call the Social Security Administration Fraud Hotline S.S.A. Fraud Hotline: 800-269-0271.

Helpful Phone Numbers of Three Major Credit Bureaus

Equifax – www.equifax.com

To order your report, call 800-685-1111

Experian – www.experian.com

To order your report, call 888-EXPERIAN (888-397-3742); To report fraud, call 888-EXPERIAN (888-397-3742)

TransUnion – www.tuc.com

To order your report, call 800-916-8800
To report fraud, call 800-680-7289

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Home Security Surveys

A home security survey is designed to show citizens where their homes are vulnerable to forced entry. Locks are checked, windows inspected and security weaknesses are identified during the survey. The information gathered will show what steps are needed to make homes more burglary-resistant.

Ask your local law enforcement agency to conduct a survey of your home.

Main Level Windows

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

Basement Windows

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 window wells or on window framing.

Sliding Glass Door

Sliding glass doors can be secured with a Charley bar, pinning or with simple locks.

Exterior Doors

Solid core hardwood doors with rugged

frames that cannot spread apart with a pry bar are recommended.

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.

Garage

Garage doors should be secured to eliminate a burglar access to tools that could help them break into the house. Also, a garage is a place for an intruder to hide.

Lights

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

House Number

A house number should be clearly displayed and well lighted at night for law enforcement to see.

Shrubs

Plants should be trimmed so they don't block possible points of entry or conceal a potential attacker.



Reporting Crimes to Police

Follow these steps when reporting a crime to police.

- Remain calm.
- Call 911.
- Identify yourself and give your location.
- Describe what is happening or what you saw happen.
- Describe the suspect or suspects.

- 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 the questions.
- Stay on the line until all the questions asked by the person taking the call have been answered.

Additional Crime Prevention Tips

- Lock the front door when working in the back yard. Lock the back door when working in the front yard.
- Don't hide keys under the doormat or anywhere outside.
- Never leave written messages outside your home. It's a sign that the home is unoccupied.
- Re-key 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-degree 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 law enforcement agency's emergency phone number near your telephone.



Observing Suspicious Activity continued

- A strange vehicle 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 vehicle.
- Someone with a weapon.
- Someone entering or leaving a business before or after business hours.
- Someone carrying items of value from a neighbor's home.
- Someone who appears to be moving household items late at night.

Definitions of common crimes:

Burglary is when one enters a structure illegally with the intention of committing a serious crime, such as stealing something or hurting someone.

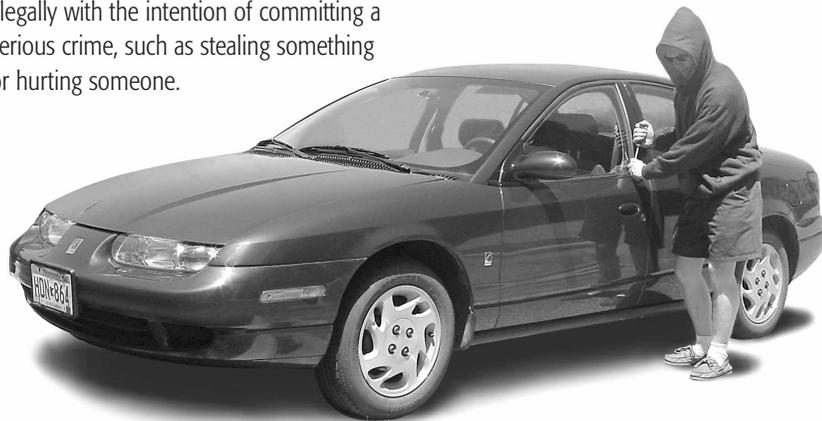
Robbery is taking another's property by force or the threat of force. It involves confrontation with the offender.

Larceny is stealing something without force or entry, such as pickpocketing 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.



Home Security Checklist

If you check the following items, you have greatly reduced the chance of burglary. If you did not check an item, refer to the page mentioned for information about increasing security.

- Do exterior lights illuminate your home? (See page 1)
- Is shrubbery trimmed so a burglar can't hide near windows and doors? (See page 1)
- Are exterior doors made of solid hardwood? (See page 3)
- Is there a 180-degree viewer in the front door? (See page 3)
- Are sliding glass doors pinned or secured with auxiliary locks? (See page 4)
- Are sheet metal screws inserted through the upper track of the sliding glass door frame to prevent removal of the doors? (See page 4)
- Are garage doors closed and locked when not in use? (See page 5)
- Are doors locked at all times? (See page 6)
- Are deadbolt locks, with a minimum one-inch throw, installed on exterior doors? (See page 6)
- Are heavy duty strike plates mounted on exterior door frames? (See page 7)
- Are windows secured with auxiliary locks or pinned with a nail? (See page 8)
- Are you enrolled in Operation Identification? (See page 10)
- Do you report suspicious persons or activity to the police immediately? (See page 18)

Outside Your Home

You can make your home less appealing to burglars by trimming shrubs so windows and doors can be fully viewed from the street. Unobstructed doors and windows are a deterrent because the intruder is forced to work where they can be seen.

Maintain adequate lighting, especially at vulnerable entry points. Install a yard light. Prominently display and light house numbers. This helps law enforcement and emergency personnel find your home.

Urge your neighbors to adequately display their house numbers.

Lock up ladders and tools so that burglars cannot use them to enter your home. Lock all valuables, such as lawn mowers and bicycles, in your garage or shed.

Always lock garage doors. This is doubly important if you have an attached garage. Burglars can enter your home through the door leading from an attached garage to the house.

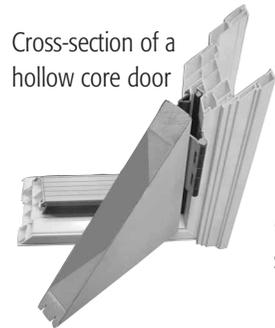


Exterior Doors

All exterior doors should be made of solid wood, steel or fiberglass. These doors 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. Mounting a deadbolt lock on a hollow core door compromises the security of 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.



Cross-section of a hollow core door

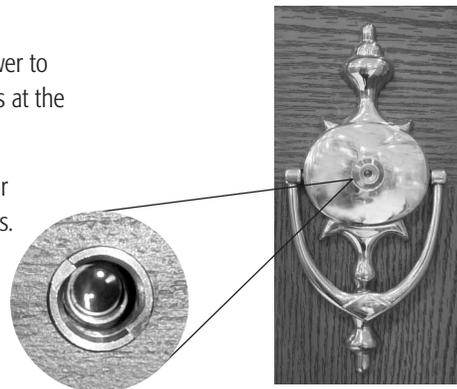


Cross-section of a solid core door

Peephole

Install a 180-degree, wide-angle viewer to exterior doors so you can 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.



Burglar Alarms

Residential burglar alarms are not universal solutions to home burglaries. They do not substitute for locked doors and windows or for other precautions.

You may want to consider installing a burglar alarm if you live in a high crime or isolated area, or are absent from home for considerable periods of time and if you have valuable possessions.

The purpose of an alarm system is to deter potential intruders. Most burglars will

reconsider forced entry if they know you have an alarm system.



For an alarm system to be effective, the alarm must sense and signal an intrusion, followed by the response of law enforcement officers.

For more information about burglar alarms, ask your local law enforcement agency for the Minnesota Crime Watch booklet, "Burglar Alarms: Do You Need One?"

Observing Suspicious Activity

If you see or are confronted by a burglar, take note of everything that you can. Note the suspect's size, weight, build, dress, speech, abnormalities and method and direction of escape.

The police will ask you about the following information.

- Hair color and style.
- Height and weight.
- Facial hair and complexion.
- Eye color or if wearing glasses.
- Nationality or speech characteristics.
- Visible scars, marks or tattoos.
- Type of shirt, pants, shoes or hat person was wearing.

- Did suspect have a weapon.
- Approximate age.
- Vehicle color, year and make.
- Vehicle license plate number.
- Direction suspect escaped.
- Was there more than one person involved in the crime.

Here is a list of suspicious activities which should be reported to your local law enforcement agency. This 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.

continued on page 17



Fish House Crime Watch

Every winter, frozen Minnesota lakes become small towns of fish houses. The average fish house is equipped with valuable sporting goods and personal property. You can minimize burglaries by marking your property with Operation Identification stickers and by removing valuable property when the fish house is not in use.

You can protect your fish house by mounting the door hinges on the inside or

using hinge pins. Install a deadbolt lock and reinforce the frame and strike plate or use a strong steel hasp that covers the screws. Use a 7/16-inch shank or shankless padlock. Windows should be too small for a thief to crawl through and covered when the house is not in use.

Make arrangements with fishing neighbors to watch each other's property. Remember, it is important to report suspicious activity while it is occurring.



Block Watch Clubs and Neighborhood Watch

Citizens can be involved in Block Watch Clubs and Neighborhood Watch programs to help reduce crime in their neighborhood. The objective is to have neighbors watch for emergencies or unusual behavior and report them to the local law enforcement agencies.

Block watchers are trained by the police officers 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 local law enforcement agency. A crime prevention officer will meet with you and your neighbors to discuss the programs in detail.

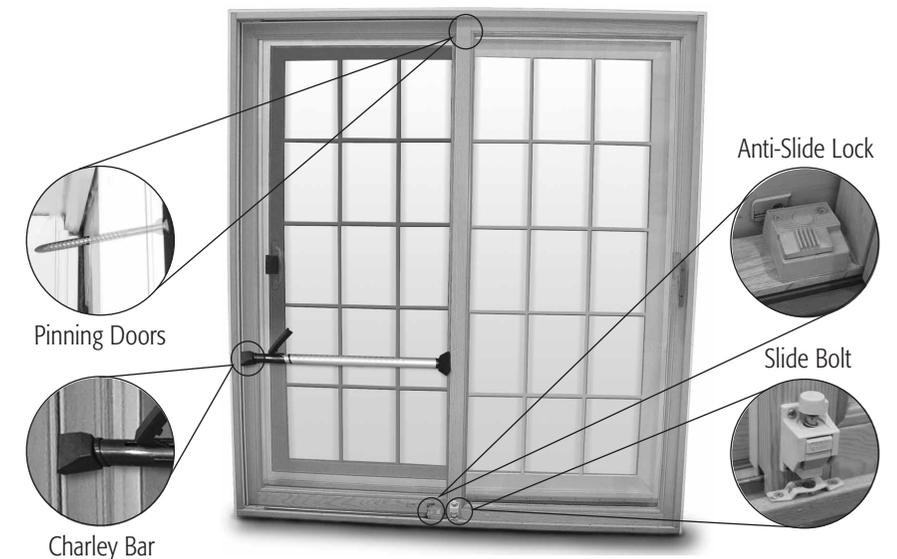
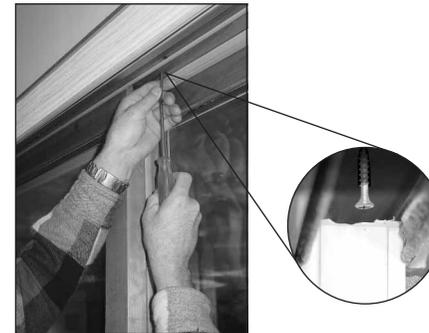


Sliding Glass Doors

Burglars often enter dwellings through sliding glass doors because they can be easily forced open. To prevent forced entry take one or more of the following precautions:

- It is easy for a burglar to pry a sliding glass door from its track. To prevent this, install three, one and one quarter-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.

- Drill a downward angled hole at the top center of the door's overlapping frames. Then insert a steel pin or heavy screw 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. Or, as an alternative, buy a sliding door bolt that locks door to floor frame.
- Buy a metal hinge bar, or Charley bar, that attaches to the side frame and folds down across the glass, bracing itself against the opposite frame.

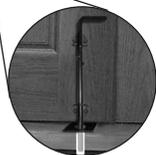




Securing Doors

Double Doors

The inactive door on double doors can be secured by installing cane bolts that are 1/2 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 3/4 inch. The door that usually opens should have a deadbolt lock.



12" High Cane Bolt

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 that was not securely attached to house studs.

Garage Doors

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

If your overhead garage door rolls on tracks, drill a hole in the track large enough for a padlock to be attached. The padlock will prevent 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 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 will change the frequency. Always unplug the opener when on vacation.

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 and off from inside the house.



Summer Cabin Protection

An extension of Operation Identification is the Home Identification Card program, which is used for summer cabins. Cabins that are unoccupied during the winter are easy targets for burglary or vandalism. The Home Identification Card protects against these crimes. The card helps law enforcement officers locate you or a designate if the cabin is burglarized or vandalized.

A Home Identification Card records the owner's name, their Operation Identification number, a winter phone number and a local contact. The card is affixed to the right

side of the cabin refrigerator. Should the cabin be burglarized, authorities will use the information to contact the owner.

The Home Identification Card also serves as a warning to would-be burglars that the property is marked with a PIN and can be identified.

Home Identification Cards are free and available from local law enforcement agencies.





Securing Your Manufactured Home

Manufactured homes can be more difficult to secure than other types of housing. The following tips will make manufactured homes as secure as possible.

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 tamper-proof.

Install either a burglar alarm system or inexpensive door alarms. Ask your local law enforcement agency for a copy of the Minnesota Crime Watch booklet, "Burglar Alarms: Do You Need One?"

Doors to utility sheds should be reinforced with plywood covering the inside of the entire door. Use carriage or stove bolts to fasten a case hardened hasp to the door. Secure the hasp with a quality padlock.

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 community. (See the section on Block Watch Clubs and Neighborhood Watch on page 15.)



Locks and Security Hardware

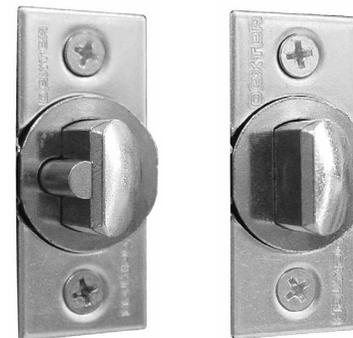
Locks and security hardware can protect against home burglaries. Hardware meeting the minimum technical requirements listed here could also protect your family from burglary-related injuries.

The key-in-knob or spring latch lock is commonly used. The spring-activated strike has a beveled edge and can be easily opened when a credit card or screwdriver is wedged between it and the strike plate. This lock offers little security.



Key-in-knob

The dead locking latch is similar to the spring latch but has a bar on the strike that can be easily opened. It offers little security because the bar is very short and weak.



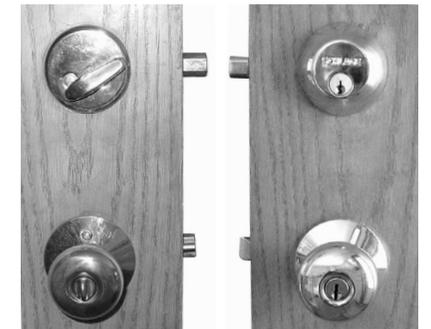
Dead Locking Latch

Spring Latch

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

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.

The single cylinder deadbolt is activated with a key on the exterior side of the door and a thumb turn piece on the interior side. Single cylinder deadbolts can be installed on doors equipped with the key-in-knob spring latch or dead locking latch locks.



Single cylinder deadbolt lock with key-in-knob spring latch lock.

Single cylinder deadbolts should meet the following 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 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.



Locks and Security Hardware

- The connection 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 1/4 inch in diameter and go into solid metal stock, not screw posts.

A heavy duty strike plate installed in place of a regular strike plate helps strengthen door frames. A strike plate is the jamb fastening that receives the bolt in the locking position. The heavy duty plate uses four to six 3-inch wood screws. These longer screws go through the frame into the jamb making it harder for someone to split the frame when kicking the door. A heavy duty strike plate will strengthen the door jamb and reinforce the lock.



Rim Lock

Rim type locks use a horizontal or vertical deadbolt locking mechanism. These locks are mounted on inside door surfaces and provide good security if they are jimmy resistant. They can only be used on in-swinging doors.

Proper installation requires that rim type locks be attached to the door with

carriage bolts. Do not use wood screws. The strike is fastened to the door jamb with at least 2-inch long wood screws.

Besides installing deadbolt or rim type locks, you may want a security closet to store valuables. The closet should have a solid hardwood door with hinges that have non-removable pins. A deadbolt lock should be mounted on the door.

Touchpad deadbolt locks

Touchpad deadbolt locks allow fast, easy keyless entry into your home all the time – especially during bad weather and at night. Often these locks fit standard openings on new doors and can replace existing hardware already mounted on doors.

You can create your own security code for these touchpad deadbolt locks. The code can easily be changed and an alarm sounds on some touchpad locks if the wrong security code is entered.

When choosing a touchpad deadbolt lock, make certain it has a one-inch deadbolt throw and comes with a heavy duty strike plate.

Remember that locks cannot make a home burglary-proof, but they can discourage forced entry.



Securing Apartment or Condominium

These tips can make your apartment or condominium more burglary-resistant.

All exterior doors should be checked for adequate security. After moving in, ask the management to have a licensed locksmith re-key all exterior doors. Deadbolt locks should be installed on exterior doors. Do not give a master key to management because that defeats the purpose of the 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. 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 exterior.

Ask that shrubs be 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.

Residents living alone should only use their first initial with their last names on mail boxes and for telephone listings.

Elevators are potential places for assault. Make sure the ground floor elevator lobby is well-lighted and visible from the street or manager's office. Don't get in an elevator with a person who looks suspicious.





When Away From Home

Before leaving on a trip, follow these tips to make your home appear occupied. They will discourage burglaries.

Ask a trusted neighbor to check your home for anything unusual. They could occasionally park a vehicle in your driveway or in front of your home and place garbage in your trash container. Have someone mow the lawn or shovel the sidewalks. Your mail and newspapers should be stopped or picked up by a friend or neighbor.

Use automatic timers to turn lights on at dusk and off at your bedtime. Vary the lights to be turned on and occasionally have a radio or television turned on. Never leave lights, radio or television on constantly.

Leave your drapes in the normal position. Have a neighbor close them at night and open them during the day.

Turn your telephone ringer to low or off. A loudly ringing unanswered phone is a sure sign that no one is home. Turn your answering machine down so no one can hear the messages.

Keep your garage door closed and locked so no one can see that your car is gone.

Tell a neighbor where you can be reached in an emergency. Don't let your travel plans be widely known.

You can tell local law enforcement about your plans.

Consider joining a neighborhood awareness program. (See the Block Watch Clubs section on page 15.)

Always lock doors and windows when you leave home – even for a few minutes.



Securing Windows

The following measures to secure your windows will make it difficult for a burglar to enter your home.

Wooden dowel wedged between sashes

Use screw to pin both sashes together



Double Hung Windows

Double hung windows are easily jimmied or pried open. These windows can be made more secure 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.

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.

Casement Windows

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 it in a convenient place. If someone breaks the glass it will be difficult to reach inside and crank open the window.



Securing Windows

Sliding Glass Window

Sliding glass windows are easily forced open. Use inexpensive auxiliary locks.

(See section on securing sliding glass doors on page 4.)



Security Glazing

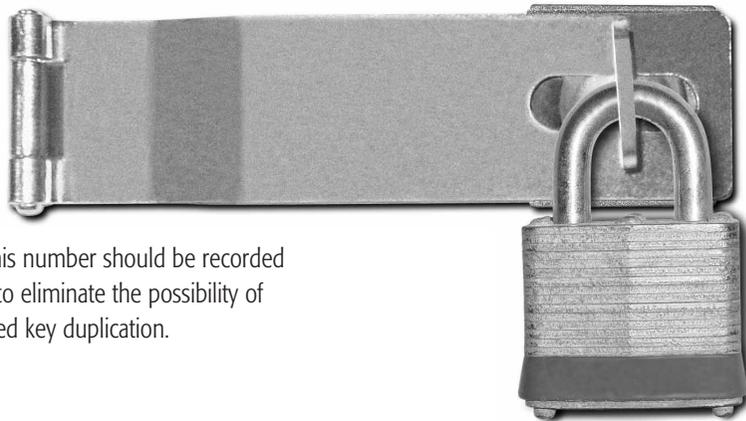
Burglary-resistant glass and other transparent materials that are shatter-resistant and virtually unbreakable can be installed to replace window and door glass. These materials can give extra security against forced entry.

Padlocks and Hasps

Padlocks should be made of case hardened steel and have a heavy body construction. The shackle should be at least 3/8 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.

Hasps should be of case hardened steel and have no screws or bolts visible when attached to doors. Case hardened screws, which 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.

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.



Operation Identification

Operation Identification is a program that reduces 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 law enforcement agency will assign a PIN to you and keep a record of it in their files. They will also provide an engraving tool to mark your property. The PIN is a nationally recognized number. All recovered property marked with it will be returned to you – even if it is recovered in another state.

You will get a form with your PIN to record all marked property. The form lets you record the PIN as well as descriptions and serial numbers of marked items. Keep it in a safe deposit box or other safe location. This information will help you identify stolen property and make it more recoverable.

Take photographs or video tape 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. Your local law enforcement agency will give you these stickers.

Mark these possessions with your PIN:

- Electronic equipment
- Fishing rods and reels
- Outboard motors
- Guns
- Appliances
- Cameras
- Watches
- Clocks
- Lawn mowers and snow blowers
- Bicycles
- Golf clubs
- Tools



Operation Identification is effective because PIN-marked property is harder for a burglar to sell. Marked property can 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.