



Do You Know How to Protect Your Home From Burglary?

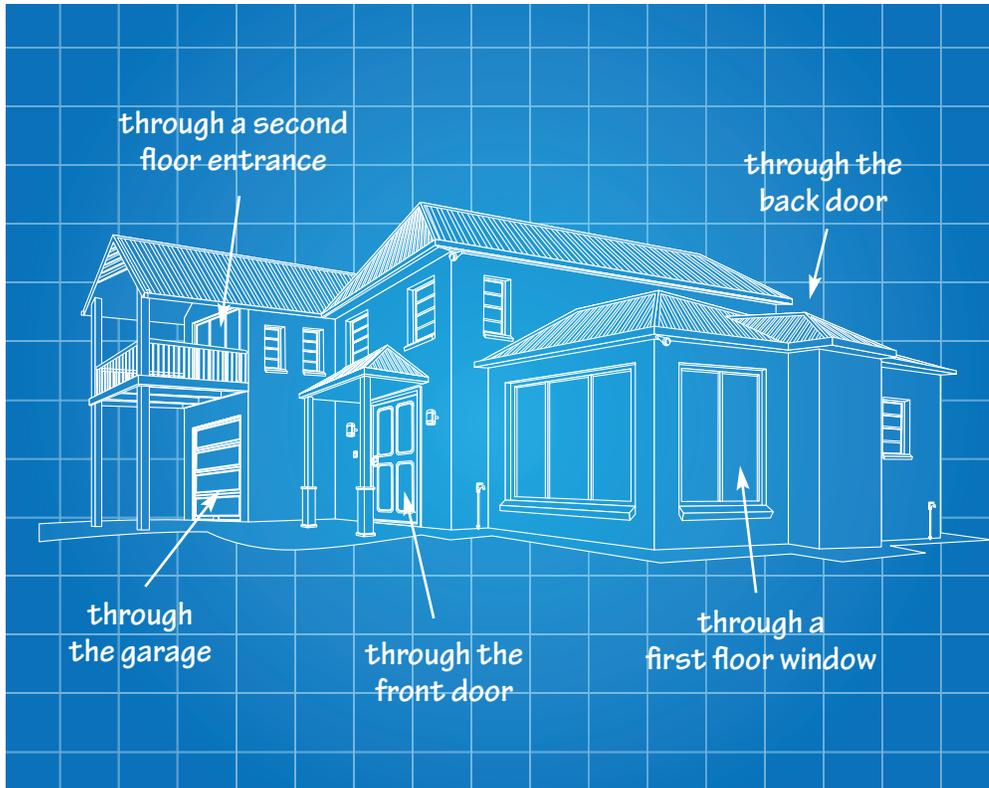


Protecting your home from burglary is an ongoing task. What seems innocent to you may actually be an invitation to burglars. Most home burglary occurs during the daytime when homes tend to be vacant more often. When a “professional” thief is targeting a home or a neighbourhood, they use a variety of tactics to gauge the likelihood of them breaking in undetected. Intruders have done their homework and know how to target an empty home. What do burglars look for when choosing a home to break into? What can you do to protect yourself and your property? Here are some helpful tips:

- ❑ Obvious signs that no one is home. This may include newspapers piled up or mailboxes overflowing. Even if you are away for just a few days, have a neighbour remove your newspapers and mail, or contact the newspaper office to suspend delivery until you return.
- ❑ If a burglar is targeting your home and suspects you might be away, they may leave a flyer in the door to see how long it remains there. The longer it is there, the less likely you are home. Remove all junk mail and flyers promptly.
- ❑ If it snows while you're out of town, get a neighbor to create tire and foot tracks into the house. Fresh snowdrifts in the driveway are a dead giveaway. Consider having your property plowed or shoveled.
- ❑ Be careful who you let into your home. This applies to delivery and repair people. Ask for identification and check windows and doors to ensure they are properly secured after they leave. Some thieves have “regular jobs” that allow them access to people's homes. This lets them check out what you own, what kind of security you have and the ability to scope out easy access points like windows that they can unlock for easy access later.
- ❑ A loud TV or radio left on is a great deterrent. Burglars want to be sure your home is empty. A noisy TV or radio leaves them guessing.
- ❑ Don't announce your vacation on Facebook or your voicemail. A determined burglar can easily track down your address.
- ❑ Burglars usually knock before they attempt to break in. If you answer, a skilled burglar will ask for directions. Sometimes they carry a clipboard and ask if you need an outdoor chore completed. Burglars always try to look like they belong.
- ❑ If you have an alarm system, make sure you always set it. Do not let the alarm installer put the system keypad where it's visible from a window or door. You don't want a burglar to see if it's set or not.
- ❑ Keep your valuables in a home safe and make sure it's bolted to the floor. Most burglars will simply carry a small home safe out with them.
- ❑ Keep garden tools, saws, axes and ladders secured in a locked garage. A burglar will use what they can find to break in.
- ❑ If you have a window air conditioner, remove it and lock the window if you are going away for any length of time.
- ❑ Trim hedges and trees near windows. Burglars like to have their access points blocked from the street.
- ❑ Install motion detector lights.
- ❑ If you're in the backyard, make sure the front and side doors are locked.
- ❑ Install anti-lift devices on windows and patio doors.
- ❑ Always lock your garage and lock your car while it is in the garage.
- ❑ If you are going to be away for any length of time, ask a trusted neighbour to mow the lawn, water the plants and put out a bag of garbage on trash day. This gives the appearance of someone being home.



Burglar Hot Spots: Where Do Burglars Gain Entrance?



Burglars typically choose to rob unoccupied homes with the easiest access, greatest amount of cover and the best escape routes.

- 34% come through the front door
- 23% use a first floor window
- 22% come through the back door
- 9% enter through the garage
- 4% get in through an unlocked entrance
- 2% enter somewhere on the second floor

What do burglars look to steal? Anything that is small and expensive that can be easily converted to cash and not hinder a quick getaway. This can include:

- cash
- laptops
- electronics
- jewelry
- guns
- prescription drugs

Most home thefts are a crime of opportunity. If you take away the opportunity, you reduce your chances of a burglary.

Choose The Right Door, Use The Right Locks



To a burglar, a wooden entrance door says, “kick me in” but they will think twice if they see a heavy-duty steel door complete with deadbolt locks and heavy duty strike plates.

- ❑ Install a solid core or metal door for all entrance points including doors that lead from attached garages into the house.
- ❑ Don't choose a door that has glass panels that, when broken, will allow the burglar to reach in and turn the deadbolt latch or unlock the door from the inside.
- ❑ The door lock should be a deadbolt lock with a one-inch throw bolt. The deadbolt should have a beveled edge (slanted) to discourage the use of channel lock pliers that can be used to shear off deadbolt lock cylinders.
- ❑ Choose a lock with a dead-latch feature; it prevents the lock from being opened by a credit card or a shim.
- ❑ Invest in a four-screw hardened metal strike plate with 3-inch screws that will sink far into the doorway entrance studs. This will discourage burglars from prying off the doorjamb.
- ❑ Use saw resistant bolts and screw heads that can't be tampered with. Use a wide-angle 160° peephole that has a cover on the inside to stop people from looking in.
- ❑ Practice good key control. Never put your name or address on your key chain. You don't want to lead burglars directly to your house if you lose your keys or if they are stolen. Also, don't leave your house keys with mechanics or service people.
- ❑ Don't keep a spare key under your doormat, above the door, in a flowerpot or anywhere else near the door. Burglars look there first!

Given enough time and tools, almost any house can be broken into; your goal is to fortify the typical entry points so they become deterrents to burglars. You can check with your local police department for more home protection tips.

Secure Your Sliding Doors

The usual locking mechanism on a sliding door is a simple latch that can be easily forced. The best way to secure sliding doors is to install keyed locks at the top and bottom. You can also make or purchase a bar that swings down from the doorframe to the middle of the door to prevent the door from sliding (it's often called a charley bar).

At minimum, place a rod or chopped off hockey stick in the bottom track of the door to keep it from being forced open.

What Keeps Burglars Away?

According to interviews with convicted burglars, these simple actions can help deter intruders:

- Having a noisy dog and/or nosy neighbours.
- Making your home look occupied while you are away through the use of automatic timers for lights, televisions.
- Not allowing mail and newspapers to pile up.