



## **Ways to Burglar-Proof Your Home**

In the good old summertime - when we tend to relax and spend time away from our homes, we need to be more aware of precautions which we can take to increase safety in our homes. After all, would-be thieves often consider the cost of breaking into our homes. Will the goods obtained be worth the time and risk involved, especially if security devices are in place? Every precaution which we can take to make it more difficult to break into our homes decreases the likelihood of our being victimized. Whether we live in an apartment or in a house, we should be aware of the kinds of things which we can do to secure and protect our dwelling.

### **For added security in your home:**

- Equip patio doors with proper fitting safety bars.
- Make sure ground floor windows are securely locked.
- Use your initials only when putting your listing in the telephone book, or on the calling board in the apartment lobby, do not indicate your gender.
- Do not indicate in any way that you live alone.
- Before opening your door, always visually check to see who is there (in an apartment), this probably means having a peep hole installed.
- Plant thorny shrubs, under windows to discourage would-be thieves.
- Trim shrubs along sidewalk, near the doors and windows so that no one can hide behind the shrubs. If shrubs are quite mature and large, be sure to trim them from the ground up to about 50 cm so that no one can crouch behind them.
- Locate large trees away from the house so that they can't be climbed to gain entry to a second story window.
- Keep an inventory of your possessions and place it in a secure place, i.e. safety deposit box. Photographs or videotapes and good ways to keep an accurate record.
- Borrow or rent an engraving unit and put your name on appliances such as televisions, VCR units, video camera, stereos, etc.
- Leave a spare key with a trusted neighbor, not under doormat.
- Invest in good external lighting, i.e. sensor lights.
- Always keep garage door closed and install a lock on it.
- Only allow people you know into your home - individuals representing the utility or telephone company will have identification and you should ask to see it.
- Never allow anyone into your home who asks to use your telephone. Instead, place the call for them while they wait outside.

- Employ individuals/workers from reputable firms only to work in and around your home. .
- Never sign contracts without expert opinions.

**And, if you are away for any reason:**

- Let a neighbor know that you are going away and for how long.
- Make sure that all mail is picked up when you are away.
- Have someone mow your lawn in the summer and shovel your drive (or have a neighbor drive his car in and out a couple times) after a snowfall.
- Don't advertise your absence on your answering machine; simply state that you are unavailable.
- Put lights on a timer system.

These are just a few suggestions for helping you to keep your home safe and to give you some peace of mind.

By BETTY DOWNING

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(Presented on behalf of the Institute of Justice Training and Community Safety and the Brockville Police Service.)