



PREVENTING RESIDENTIAL BURGLARIES

Many Seattle neighborhoods have had a problem with burglaries. Thieves frequently target garages, sheds, or other storage buildings. However, homes are also targeted, sometimes when occupied. In occupied burglaries, victims are asleep, outside or busy in other parts of the home and unaware their residence is being burglarized. Thefts from occupied residences may escalate into home-invasion robberies.

BURGLARY PREVENTION:

- Record the serial numbers and photograph your valuables; keep copies in a safe place. To help deter theft and aid investigations, etch electronics and other valuables with your WA Driver's License/ID #.
- **Check all doors and windows to ensure they lock/latch securely.** Re-check often for needed repairs.
- **If you have a house with an electronic garage door opener,** take extra steps to protect yourself. Some burglars use multi-frequency transmitters to open garage doors.
- **Disable the garage door from the inside by switching it off** when locking up at night, going away for the day, or leaving town.
- **Take extra precautions before going on vacation.** Burglars often case neighborhoods for unoccupied homes, even those empty just for a few days. (A favorite burglar tactic is knocking on doors).
- **BEFORE LEAVING HOME FOR MORE THAN A DAY:**
 - ♦ **Have paper delivery temporarily stopped and hold the mail.** Arrange for mail holds online at www.usps.com or ask a trusted person to pick it up.
 - ♦ **Arrange for lawn mowing and other maintenance before extended absences.**
 - ♦ **Ask a neighbor to park a car in your driveway** and use your garbage container.
 - ♦ **Take garbage back from the curb (or arrange for someone else to use it or move it for you).**
 - ♦ **Put items such as children's toys, ladders, lawn furniture, etc. away.**
- **Lights:** Preset automatic timers on various interior lights and portable radios. Install photo electric light sensor timers on exterior lights. They are sold as both plug-in or socket screw-in devices, turning lights on at dusk and off at dawn.
- **Ask family, a neighbor or friend to check the house frequently.** Have them switch on/off various lights, turn radio or TV on/off, move car, check for packages delivered, change position of curtains and blinds, etc., to reduce the deserted appearance. When possible, arrange for a house sitter.
- **Be extra cautious after returning home.** Burglaries sometimes occur just after people return from vacation. (**Burglars also love to revisit former victims,** after just enough time to replace stolen items).
- **Avoid confronting suspects in your home. Get to a safe place; then call 911.**

PHYSICAL SECURITY:

Securing your home mechanically is a cost-effective burglary prevention measure.

- Install top-rated "**bump-proof**" deadbolts and locks on exterior doors and between garage and home.
- Use solid-core wood, metal or reinforced doors, reinforced door jams and jam braces on exterior entries.
- Secure **tamper-proof hinges** and **heavy-duty strike plates** with **three-inch screws**.
- Install safety glass or high-security film on vulnerable windows; add supplemental lighting.
- Direct and focus motion-sensor lighting at entryways, windows and other vulnerable spots.
- Avoid flood lighting, uneven lighting and light trespass (onto neighbors). Glare from overly bright lighting makes it difficult for eyes to adjust. Uneven lighting creates deep pools of shadows, hiding prowlers.
- Install digital surveillance cameras with remote phone/internet/electronic or audio monitoring devices.
- If you use an alarm system, consider hiring a private guard service to verify alarm activations, to avoid paying for false alarm SPD activations.