

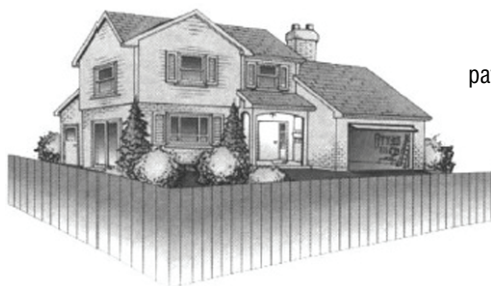
Protecting Your Home

Helpful Tips

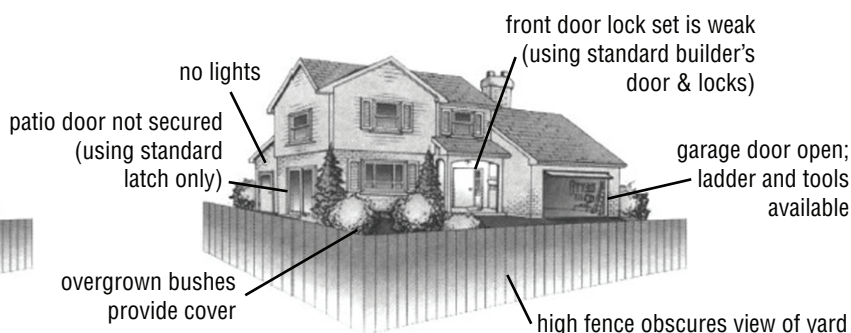


Residential break and enters are all too common occurrences in most municipalities in Canada. Even using past statistics, it is almost impossible to anticipate where or when a break-in is going to occur. Some areas are consistently high risk, while others experience sudden waves of property crime, then return to normal patterns. One fact remains consistent: each home, unless suitably secured, will offer the opportunity for a break, enter and theft to occur.

Here's how the home looked to the family:



Here's how the home looked to the crook:



PROTECTING YOUR HOME - SIMPLE TIPS



There are many strategies householders can engage to reduce the risk of becoming a victim, starting with the first line of defence—a security-conscious state of mind. Security-conscious householders think about security as a matter of course, not only when locking up the family home to go on holidays, but as an integral part of daily living; it's the psychological key to ensuring maximum physical security. It isn't necessary to convert your home into a fortress. It is necessary to accept that in a fast changing world, lifestyles change, and security consciousness is now an unwanted but essential part of contemporary Canadian life—as it is in most other countries of the developed world.

There are many strategies we can adopt, to ensure our houses and communities are more secure, and to keep our sense of neighbourliness and community intact. The various points of entry to a home are the potential target areas through which a burglar can gain access to your home and valuables. An opportunistic thief looks for the target offering the least amount of security and resistance to reduce his chances of detection.

Every homeowner must take into consideration the weaknesses presented by their home and identify the target areas requiring attention. For example a door with a lock in the knob should be re-enforced with an auxiliary lock. A garage with a direct access to a residence should be secured while the homeowner is away for any length of time.

The following information provides the homeowner with basic information about techniques to secure your home. Some require the expertise of a locksmith and others are do-it-yourself methods. Any decision regarding security improvements should be carefully appraised by taking lifestyle, home location, and budget into consideration.

Always Lock Up

Don't overlook the obvious. Doors and windows should be locked, not only when we leave the house, but when we are elsewhere in the house, on the phone, in the garden, or otherwise preoccupied, away from points of entry.

The main door is the most likely point of entry and should be your first priority. A key-operated deadlock on a solid timber door is the safest option. If intruders get into your house through another entry, a keyoperated deadlock on the main door will make it more difficult for them to carry stolen goods out. Reinforce the deadlock wherever possible with a security screen, and a peephole, so you get to see any visitors before they see you.

Install the same key-operated lock system on all other doors—it makes locking up and ownerentry easier. Security firms can install tamper-proof locks. Sliding glass doors are particularly vulnerable and should be bolted top and bottom or fitted with a specifically designed deadlock.



Secure all windows. No windows are too high or too small for burglars. All windows should be secured with keyed locks or security grills. Do not resort to a piece of dowel in the window track, and lock all upper-level windows, they are easier to reach than you think.

Sheds and garages are usually the repository of tools and other implements burglars use to assist in a break-in. Keep them padlocked. If there is a connecting door between the garage and your house, ensure it is always locked.

Side gates are easily overlooked. They should also be securely locked, and children and grandchildren educated to always lock the gates behind them.

Do not leave keys outside. Take the keys with you. It may be advisable to leave a spare set with a trusted friend or relative.

Light Up At Night

Keep doors, windows, and pathways well-lit at night. Movement activated sensor lights are highly recommended. Proper and creative lighting of your premises and home not only makes you feel secure but makes your property safer. If you are away from your house, use timers on various lights within your home to give the 'message' that your residence is inhabited. It can also be useful to leave a radio or TV playing to give the impression that someone is home.

Co-opt A Canine

Research shows a family dog deters many potential offenders. Consider keeping a dog. Even if you don't own one, think about hanging a 'beware of the dog' sign at any outside gates. If burglars are casing the place, the prospect of a burglar-unfriendly dog can be good enough reason for many to beat a retreat.



PROTECTING YOUR HOME - SIMPLE TIPS

Lock Up The Meter Box

Locking up your meter box prevents thieves interfering with your power supply or security sensor light system. (Consult electricity authorities for further information.)

Prepare For An Emergency

Ensure your house number is clearly visible. If you have to call police or other emergency services, they should be able to find your house quickly. Your house numbers should be clearly mounted on both the front and back of your house. **(Having the house number clearly visible at the rear of your property ensures a neighbour will be able to identify your house, should he or she report suspicious activity at the rear of the house. Having your house number clearly marked at the rear will also assist police officers that may be approaching the house from the rear to investigate criminal activity.)** Programme telephone numbers for emergency services, close friends, relatives or neighbours into your telephone's memory so that in a state of emergency you can summon assistance quickly.



Householders Identification

Do not put your name on the gate or the exterior of your home. This gives burglars a chance to look up your telephone number in the directory and to phone on a false pretence.

Distraction Burglary

Some burglars try to trick their way in. They may say they are from the water, gas or electric company. They may ask for a glass of water, or to wash their hands or claim to have lost a pet. In fact, they'll use any story they can to get in. They can be young (even children) or old, male or female, and might work alone or in teams. They often target the elderly. If in doubt, keep them out, particularly if you're on your own. Ask them to make an appointment or come back later when someone else is around. Genuine callers won't mind. If you are suspicious, report the incident to the police. You may help prevent them from burgling someone else.

Remember:

- **Lock** – keep your doors and windows locked, even when you're at home.
- **Stop** – are you expecting anyone, do they have an appointment? Make sure the back door is locked—some thieves work in pairs with the other one sneaking in the back while you're at the front door.
- **Chain** – put the door bar or chain on before you open the door.
- **Check** – check their identity carefully. Ask for an ID card. Close the door and check using a phone number from the phone book or a relevant bill, not the one on the card.

Help The Police Help You

It's you and your neighbours who are in the best position to recognise suspicious activity in your street. Look out for each other and report any suspicious activities to the police. It will help you remember details if you write down a description of anyone acting suspiciously in your neighbourhood, as well as the license number and description of their vehicle.

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