

Protecting Your Home Doors



Doors

Make sure the doors and frames are strong and in good condition. Wooden doors should be solid and at least 44mm (13/4") thick. Fit deadlocks to all outside doors, including French doors. And make sure you use them. You can make wooden doors stronger by fitting a steel strip and plates to the door frame and around the lock. Keep your doors locked even when you're at home. Fit bolts to the top and bottom of French doors. Remember to fit all security devices with strong screws or bolts.

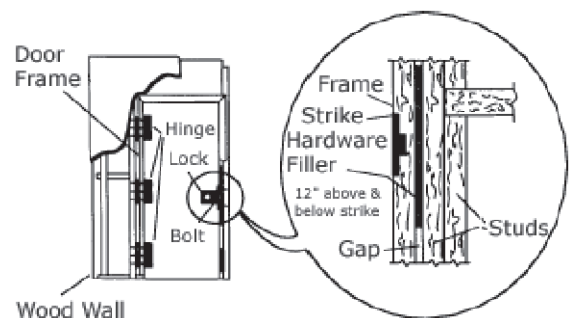
Before fitting locks to metal doors, check with the installer to make sure that this will not affect your warranty.

Door Frames

Even the best locks can be defeated by a method known as "spreading" where a wedge or jack-like device is inserted between the two door frames. This method can often be successful because doors and frames are purchased as single units and are placed into the wall opening provided by the builder during construction. Although the opening between the wall and the frame is braced at the top and bottom with alignment wedges, the midsections are often left open which permits the frame to bow under pressure. Solid blocks inserted between these openings will help to resist this form of entry.

To strengthen the frame, install 3–4" screws through the doorstop strip and the frame and into the heavier wood of the wall construction. The same procedure should be applied to the hinge side to further reduce an intruders ability to spread the door frame.

Install a metal plate on the inside of your door frame, surrounding the strike plate opening. This plate will re-enforce your door frame at its weakest point.

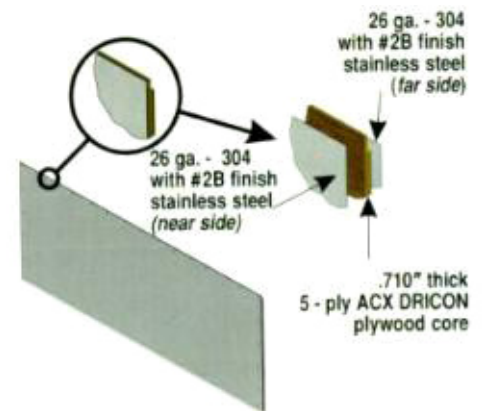
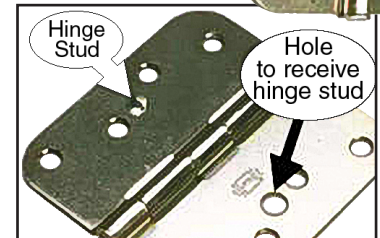


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Exposed Hinges

If your door opens outward you must make sure that your exposed hinges are secured. If exposed hinge pins can be removed then an intruder can gain entry by swinging the door on the lock after prying open the single hinge.

- Ensure that your door is equipped with non-removable hinge pins.
- Drill a matching hole in each hinge leaf or remove a matching screw from each. In one hole insert a screw that is 1/2" longer than the hole is deep. Cut off the screw head with a hacksaw so that when the door closes the headless screws will fit into the hole on the opposite leaf and hold the door to the frame even with the hinge pins removed.
- Prevent the removal of the hinge pins by drilling a small hole into the hinge and inserting a small steel pin or screw to hold the pin.



Doors

While all the exterior doors should have an equal resistance to forced entrance, the front door is the most important one to make secure.

It is the most obvious, usually the easiest to get to, and is the first one tried by a burglar. The quality of the door is equally as important as the lock installed. Steel doors or solid core wooden doors provide satisfactory resistance against forced entry. Any hollow core door should be replaced or at least reinforced by adding exterior grade plywood on the outside of the door.

A hollow core door is filled with corrugated cardboard and is easily broken through. The panel edge is the weak point in a stile and rail door and should be reinforced with exterior grade plywood. A stile and rail door has stiles and rails as part of the face of the door, the remainder is composed of inset glass or wooden panels which can easily be forced.

French or Double Doors

The first area of concern with double doors is to ensure that one door is braced to reduce the inward give of the doors. This leaves only one door active.

- If the doors have glass panes then install long slide bolts at the top and bottom of the door that you are bracing.
- On the active door install a jimmy proof deadbolt with a double cylinder. This lock not only secures the active door but also bolts the two doors snugly together.

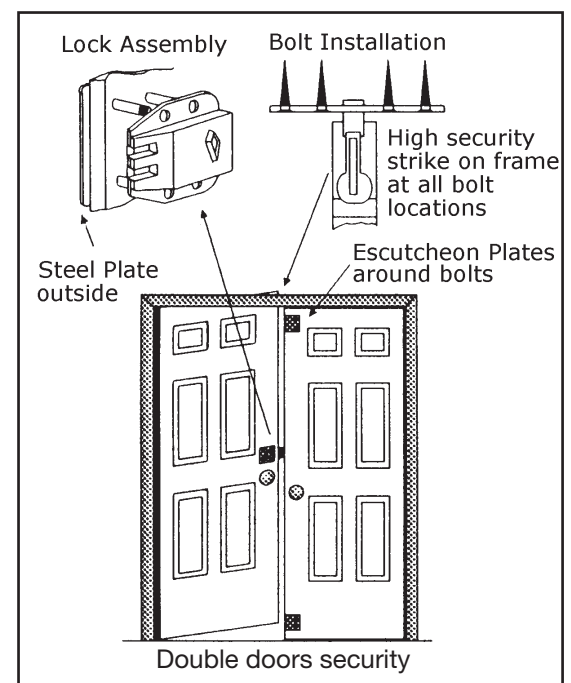
Chains And Door Viewers

Buy a door bar or chain and door viewer. Use them every time someone calls. Remember, though, that you only use the door chain or bar when answering the door—don't leave it on all the time. Glass panels on or around doors are especially vulnerable, so replace them with laminated glass—or, you can buy special film to stick to the inside that will do the same thing.



Letterboxes

Never hang a spare key inside the letterbox. This is an obvious place that a thief will check. Letterboxes should be at least 400mm (16 inches) from any locks. Consider fitting a letterbox cage or other restrictor,



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which prevents thieves from putting their hands through the letterbox and trying the latches from the inside.

Sliding Patio Doors

Sliding patio doors should have anti-lift devices and locks fitted to the top and bottom to stop them being removed from outside, unless they already have a multi-locking system. Get specialist advice. If you are getting new or replacement patio doors, ask the system supplier for their high-security specification.

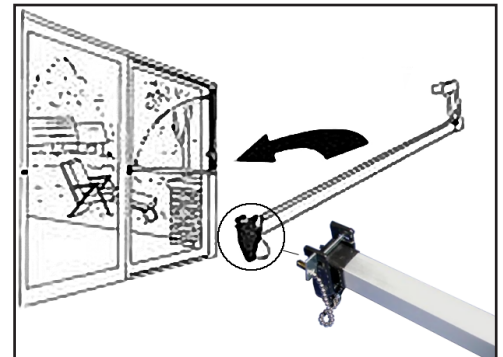
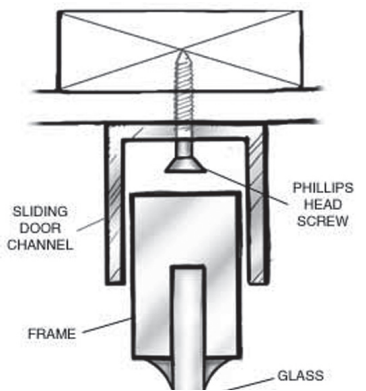
Patio doors present several security problems:

- The glass panels of many doors can be lifted out of their tracks and removed.
- The locking mechanism can easily be pried open and provides little security.
- The fixed panel is sometimes held in place by brackets with screws exposed to the exterior.

To stop the door from being lifted out of its frame the "jimmy-plates" or screws should be mounted at the top of the track to reduce any vertical play in the door.

A "Charlie Bar" folds down horizontally and blocks movement of the sliding portion of the door. This type of locking device has the advantage of high visibility which may deter a potential intruder and is also easy to install. A metal rod, a cut down hockey stick to a length of wooden doweling fitted snugly along the bottom of the door track is an easy do-it-yourself method of preventing a patio door from being forced open.

Auxiliary bolts, which operate with or without a key, can be installed at the top or bottom of patio door tracks. There are various types of patio door locks available with various levels of effectiveness. Consultation with a locksmith will ensure that you have the proper lock installed.



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