

## **Burglary Prevention Tips**

Burglary is a crime of opportunity. Make the burglar's work risky and difficult, and you stand a good chance of stopping them before they get in. By following these simple steps, you can reduce the possibility that your home will be targeted.

### **DOORS AND WINDOWS**

- Always lock your doors and windows even when leaving for just a minute.
- All exterior doors should be solid core or of metal construction.
- All entry doors should be equipped with a good quality deadbolt lock having a minimum of a one inch throw.
- A good quality double cylinder deadbolt lock should be used if there is glass within 40 inches of the lock.
- If using a double cylinder deadbolt lock, make sure a key is readily accessible in case of an emergency.
- Use a heavy duty strike plate secured with number 12 gauge three-inch wood screws.
- Install a peephole with a 180-degree viewing area. Never open the door without knowing who is there.
- Secure any sliding glass doors with an anti-lifting device and a secondary locking device.
- Windows have latches and not locks, therefore, install secondary locking devices on all windows.

### **EXTERIOR AND LANDSCAPE**

- Install lights in areas around doors, walkways, and driveways.
- Locate outside lights high and out of reach.
- Use inexpensive timers or photo electric cells to automatically turn the lights on and off at dusk and dawn.
- Trim shrubbery and trees so doors and windows are visible from the street.
- If there is a second floor, prune the trees so that a thief cannot use them to reach a second floor window.
- To discourage an intruder, plant thorny plants along fences and near windows.
- Do not leave ladders or tools outside, they can assist a person in gaining entry.
- Gates on fenced yards should be locked with good quality padlocks.
- Install large reflective numbers (min. 3" high) on your house so emergency personnel can find your home quickly.
- Report street light outages ASAP.

### **ALARM SYSTEMS**

- Choose a reputable, well established company.
- Learn how to use your alarm system properly to reduce false alarms.
- Do not write your alarm code/password on or near the alarm keypad.
- Put a warning sign on windows and entrances.
- Make sure your alarm call back list is always up to date.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Acknowledge all callers through locked doors.
- Keep doors, windows and garage doors closed and locked even when at home.
- Before moving into a new house, re-key or change the locks on all exterior doors, also change the code to your garage door opener.
- Draw all curtains or shades at night to prevent viewing from the street.
- Never leave a house key in an obvious place such as under plants or a doormat. (*First place burglars look*).
- Keep an inventory of all valuables. Include photos or video, descriptions, and serial #'s of all electronics.
- Engrave valuables with your Texas driver's license #. (Preceded by the letters "TX"®). In the event your home is burglarized, this will help police identify the property, if it is recovered.
- Secure cash and jewelry in bonded storage.
- Never put cartons for new equipment at the curb for trash. Break down the boxes and bundle them with the writing on the inside.
- If you come home and see a broken window or door that's been left open, don't go in. Confronting a burglar can be dangerous. Phone the Sheriff's dept. immediately from a neighbor's house or another location.
- When traveling, keep your home looking lived-in by having grass cut, mail and newspapers picked up, and lights turned on and off.
- Also when traveling, mail or fax a Vacation Watch form to the Harris County Sheriff's Department. (Download a copy from the Willowlake Website.)

## **GETTING INVOLVED**

- Know who belongs in your neighborhood. Report suspicious persons, vehicles or activity to the Sheriff's Department immediately. Be alert in protecting not only your home but your neighbors as well.
- Don't tell a stranger that your neighbor is not at home or volunteer any information about your neighbor.
- Never leave notes on your door that reveals that your home is not occupied.
- Get trees trimmed that interfere with street lights.
- Door to door salesman. Don't deal with them. Don't let them in your home!