Home Safety Handbook

California Department of Justice

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Cover illustration by Lee Judge

INTRODUCTION

When was the last time you heard about a house being burglarized? Maybe you have been hit yourself. Not a good feeling, is it?

You don't have to be a victim of burglary. While it is one of the most frequently committed crimes, it's preventable. Most home burglaries are done by opportunists who spot an open window, a faulty lock or a house that looks like no one's going to be around for a while. In California, nearly one third of all burglaries are classified as "no-force entries" because the burglars simply walked in through an unlocked door or climbed in an open window.

You can keep this from happening to you. Read this book to find out what you need to do. Most of the suggestions will cost you very little and will contribute immensely to your peace of mind. They will also safeguard your property.

Remember — lock your doors and windows when you leave. Don't become a crime statistic, and please share this book with your neighbor.

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HOME SECURITY SURVEY

No house is absolutely burglar-proof when professional burglars target your home. But they would be the first to admit that you can discourage burglars if you beef up your home security. You can begin this process by identifying your weak areas and fixing them.

The checklist below will assist you in systematically surveying your home. Every "no" check mark shows a weak point that may let a burglar into your home.

If you have security risks, read this handbook to find out how to correct them. As you eliminate the "no" check marks, you improve your protection.

Remember, this survey will only identify your weak areas. You have not improved your home security until these are corrected. Complying with these suggestions will not, of course, make your home burglar-proof, but it will certainly improve your protection.

Safe practices

	YES	NO
1. Do you keep a list of all valuable property?	[ ]	[ ]
2. Do you have a list of the serial numbers of your watches, cameras, typewriters, personal computers and similar items?	[ ]	[ ]
3. Do you have a description of other valuable property that does not have a number?	[ ]	[ ]
4. Have you taken photographs or videotaped your jewelry, antiques or collectibles?	[ ]	[ ]
5. Do you avoid unnecessary display or publicity of your valuables?	[ ]	[ ]
6. Do you keep excess cash and other valuables in a bank?	[ ]	[ ]
7. Do you plan so that you do not need to "hide" a key under the doormat or similar place?	[ ]	[ ]
8. Have you told your family what to do if they discover a burglar breaking in or already in the house?	[ ]	[ ]
9. Have you told your family to leave the house undisturbed and to call the police or sheriff if they discover a burglary has been committed?	[ ]	[ ]
10. Are your trees and shrubs trimmed to eliminate hiding places?	[ ]	[ ]
11. Do you have emergency phone numbers listed on your telephone?	[ ]	[ ]
12. Are lights installed around the perimeter of your house?	[ ]	[ ]

	YES	NO
13. Is your house number illuminated and easily visible from the street during all hours of the day/night?	[ ]	[ ]
14. Have you made it more difficult for the burglar by locking up your ladder or relocating trellises and drain pipes that can be used to climb to the second floor or roof?	[ ]	[ ]

When you go on a trip

15. Do you arrange for neighbors or friends to pick up newspapers, mail, packages and other deliveries?	[ ]	[ ]
16. Do you notify a neighbor?	[ ]	[ ]
17. Do you notify your police/sheriff? (Some jurisdictions provide vacation checks of homes.)	[ ]	[ ]
18. Do you arrange to keep your lawn maintained?	[ ]	[ ]
19. Do you use timing devices to turn your lamps on and off?	[ ]	[ ]

Door and entry areas

20. Are your exterior doors of solid core construction?	[ ]	[ ]
21. Do entry doors have a wide-angle viewer?	[ ]	[ ]
22. Do exterior doors have cylinder-type deadbolt locks with at least a one-inch throw and beveled cylinder guard?	[ ]	[ ]
23. Do the doors without cylinder locks have a heavy bolt or some similar secure device that can be operated only from the inside?	[ ]	[ ]
24. Can all of your doors (basement, porch, french, balcony) be securely locked?	[ ]	[ ]
25. Do your basement doors have locks that allow you to isolate that part of your house?	[ ]	[ ]
26. Are all your locks in good repair?	[ ]	[ ]
27. Are the door strike plates (the jamb fastening that receives the bolt in the locking position) installed with three-inch screws?	[ ]	[ ]
28. Do you know everyone who has a key to your house? (Or are keys still in possession of previous owners and friends?)	[ ]	[ ]
29. Do all outswinging doors have a locking pin or non-removable pins?	[ ]	[ ]
30. Are entry areas unobstructed by shrubbery and other decor to permit maximum visibility?	[ ]	[ ]
31. Does the porch light have a minimum 60-watt bulb?	[ ]	[ ]
32. Do sliding doors have an auxiliary lock that locks both the door panels together or active side to the frame?	[ ]	[ ]

	YES	NO
33. Is the garage door secured with a padlock, hasp or other good auxiliary lock? And do you use it?	[ ]	[ ]
34. Do you lock your garage door at night?	[ ]	[ ]
35. Do you lock your garage door when you are away from home?	[ ]	[ ]
36. Do you lock your garage door leading into the house?	[ ]	[ ]
37. Do you lock your car and take the keys out even when it is parked in your garage?	[ ]	[ ]

Windows

38. Are all windows equipped with auxiliary locks or pinned?	[ ]	[ ]
39. Have you replaced or secured louvered windows?	[ ]	[ ]
40. Are your window locks properly and securely mounted?	[ ]	[ ]
41. Do you keep your windows locked when they are shut?	[ ]	[ ]
42. Do you have good, secure locks on garage windows?	[ ]	[ ]
43. Do you have garage windows covered with curtains or blinds?	[ ]	[ ]
44. Are you as careful of basement and second floor windows as you are of those on the first floor?	[ ]	[ ]

If you would like professional advice and assistance in a thorough home security survey, call your local law enforcement agency. To keep your guard up, take a critical look at your home security every three to four months. Do not become lax — crime prevention is a continuous process.

PROTECTING YOUR PROPERTY

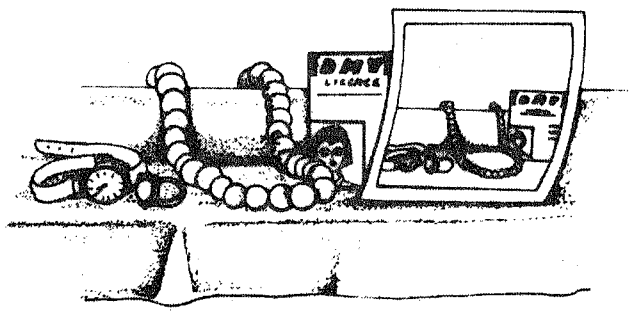
Mark and record your property — Operation Identification

The experience of many communities vividly confirms that you and your community can reduce the risk of burglary by simply marking your possessions. Some towns have had up to a 25 percent decline in burglaries after instituting such a program. The program is usually known as "Operation Identification."

Using an inexpensive electric etching pencil or engraver — often available on loan from your local law enforcement agency — you engrave your personal property with your driver's license number. (*Do not use your social security number.* Federal law forbids the use of social security numbers to trace an individual.)

Inscribe your driver's license number, preceded by the letters "CA" (California), on furniture, appliances, television, stereo components, guns, cameras, lawn equipment, tools, musical instruments, personal computers, etc. These numbers can be placed on the base or rear portion of the item without marring the appearance of the item. Electric engraving pencils are as easy to write with as a ball point pen and are a worthwhile investment.

Some small items, such as jewelry which cannot be marked, should be photographed. Larger items can be videotaped. Place your driver's license photo next to the item for easy ownership identification.



Extremely valuable jewelry should be appraised by a reputable appraiser. Place a description and listing of the items on the back of the photograph. In fact, you may wish to photograph each room in your house.

Once you have marked your property, record it on an inventory list. A sample inventory form appears in the back of this handbook. Put one copy of the list and photographs in your safe deposit box, fire-proof box, freezer portion of your refrigerator, or otherwise out of reach of a burglar.

Also, save receipts with the model and serial numbers of your more valuable items and keep them with the inventory list. If you have a burglary loss — or a fire, storm or any other kind of loss — the list will help you remember what you had and the receipts will help you establish proof of their value for filing an insurance claim.

Update your inventory at least once a year to make sure newly-bought items are included.

There is evidence that burglars avoid both homes and communities where Operation Identification is used. So after identifying your property, then let a would-be burglar know that the property is marked. Many local law enforcement agencies can provide decals to warn potential burglars that the home is a participant in "Operation Identification."

Start or join Neighborhood Watch

Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program that uses citizens, in cooperation with law enforcement, to reduce crime in their communities. It involves neighbors getting to know each other, taking the time to watch out for each other, and working together in a program of mutual assistance.

Neighborhood Watch is the most effective means to substantially reduce residential burglaries and other crimes in your community. By participating in a Neighborhood Watch program you will be working in cooperation with law enforcement and you will learn:

- Effective crime prevention techniques for home and neighborhood safety.
- How you can be a good neighbor by becoming law enforcement's "eyes and ears" and help them do their job of investigating and arresting criminals.
- How to report crime: what to look for, how to describe the person, vehicle or activity and what other information to give.

To find out more about Neighborhood Watch, contact your local law enforcement agency or write to the Attorney General's Crime Prevention Center.

Take the initiative and start a Neighborhood Watch program in your area.

Be neighborly

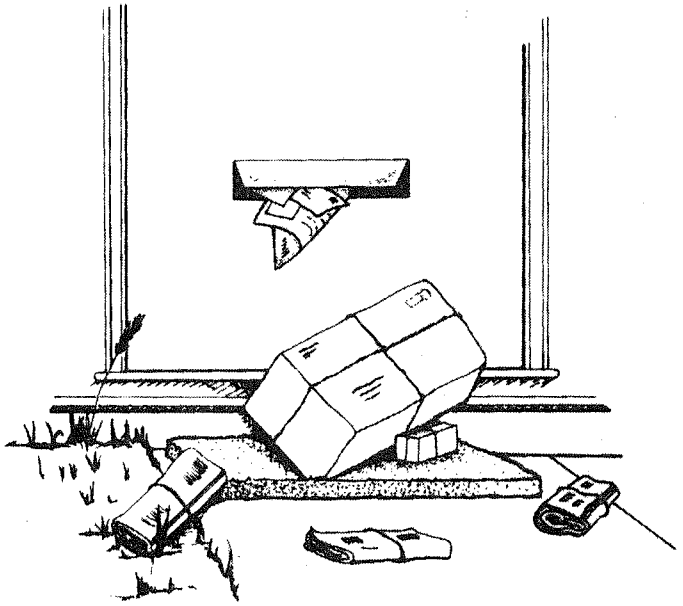
Talk with your neighbors regarding your concern about burglary. Tell them what you are doing to protect your home. Ask them to report any suspicious persons or activities around your home to your law enforcement agency. Good neighbors make safe neighborhoods.

Don't tip off burglars by telephone

Burglars often try to find out if anyone is home by phoning. If you get several suspicious "wrong number" calls or "nobody-at-the-other-end" calls, tell the police. Warn family members, especially children, not to give out information by phone — especially about who is home, who is out, or how long anyone is expected to be out.

If you use an answering machine, do not indicate on the recording that you will be gone for a specific time. A more appropriate message is that you screen calls and sometimes you may be home or not.

If your name is in the telephone book, do not place your full name on the mailbox, door or apartment building. Use your first two initials and last name only. Your name on display only makes it easier for the burglar to look your phone number up in the phone book.



Don't advertise your vacation plans

Inform one or two people of your vacation plans — a trusted neighbor who can keep an eye on things while you are gone. Have him or her pick up your newspaper and other deliveries. (*Do not inform any delivery people that you will be on vacation.*) Arrange to have the lawn mowed. Ask a neighbor to put your garbage can out.

Don't reward the burglar who does get in

If, despite your precautions, a burglar does get into your home, do not give him or her a "bonus" of cash or easily-carried jewelry.

Never keep large sums of cash around the house. Keep valuable jewelry that you do not often wear in a safe deposit box.

Insure against theft

A homeowner's or renter's insurance policy provides basic economic protection against burglary and other types of theft. Policies designed for mobile homeowners and condominium owners serve the same purpose. If you do not already have such a policy, it is suggested you purchase one without delay. (Some insurance companies provide premium discounts if you take certain home security precautions, i.e., install deadbolt locks, participate in Operation Identification, etc.)

A typical homeowner's policy insures you against loss by burglary for up to 50 percent. Say, for example, your home is insured for $100,000. You have $50,000 in protection on the contents of your home, whether from burglary or another loss. If you rent, your burglary protection is the full amount stated in the policy.

Policies and insurance companies differ in their provisions. Many insurance companies offer "full replacement" compensation for stolen property, while others will pay for the loss on the basis of the property's replacement cost minus depreciation. There may also be a deductible applied to this coverage.

Valuable items — collections, furs, quality cameras, expensive jewelry — should be protected by an endorsement (sometimes called a floater) on your policy. This adds coverage on items beyond the limits that apply to certain kinds of property.

Any questions you have about theft coverage should be directed to your insurance agent.

The next step

Now that you have learned about some precautions you can take, go a step further — learn about securing your home with hardware. The next section of this handbook describes what's a good lock, a good door, and how to secure your windows.

PROTECTING AGAINST ENTRY

Many items described in this section are inexpensive and can be installed yourself. Some, however, may require a professional to install them. Your local police or sheriff's department can answer any questions you may have.

Key control

True security begins with *key control.* When you move into a home or apartment or lose your keys, *always* have the locks *rekeyed.* You don't have to replace the lock itself, as rekeying of locks will render the previous keys useless. Any licensed locksmith can change the tumblers in your outside door locks quickly and inexpensively.

Do not leave an "emergency" key under the door mat, on top of the door frame or in any other "hiding spot" so well-known to burglars.

Never attach a name or license tag to your house keys. If keys are lost or stolen, you will have an unwelcome visitor very quickly!

Keep car keys and house keys separate. This way your house keys are never left with a stranger when you have your car parked at a restaurant or parking lot.

Hinge doors

The hinge door is the most common type used in houses and apartments. They are used for front, porch, garage and basement doors leading into the home. All exterior hinge doors should be of solid core construction, 1-3/4 inch thick. The door frame should be of solid construction and be equipped with a proper strike plate. Hollow core or composition board doors can easily be battered or broken through.

Outside hinges

Exterior doors with hinges on the outside will provide a burglar with easy access to your home. The burglar only has to remove the hinges and lift the door away from its frame. This situation can be corrected in three ways:

- Remove the door and remount the hinges on the inside of the frame so that the door swings inward.
- Install a set of hinges with nonremovable hinge pins.
- Install a locking pin below the existing hinge plate. Here is how:
  1) Drill holes below the hinge plate.
  2) Insert a "headless" screw, bolt or nail into the door jamb below the hinge plate. Leave at least one-half inch of the screw, bolt or nail extending from the frame.

Once this is done, as the door closes, the pin in the jamb will penetrate the hole in the door and the door will be held in position even if the hinge pins are removed.

Locks for hinge doors

For all key-in-the-knob locks, a dead-latching plunger type lock is recommended, *but do not rely on key-in-the-knob locks.* Although these are common locking devices, they provide little security. These locks on an outside door are an invitation to even the most inexperienced burglar. These locks can be forced by breaking off the knob, and frequently they can

be opened by prying or slipping a piece of plastic between the jamb and the bolt. Key-in-the-knob locks, however, can effectively be supplemented by the addition of a deadbolt.

Use one-inch deadbolts on all exterior doors.

The best defense for a good solid core wood door is a deadbolt lock with one-inch throw bolt. If there are no windows in or near the door, the bolt may be operated from inside by a thumb turn.

CAUTION: Many communities prohibit the use of a double key cylinder deadbolt lock because it may be hazardous if the door is to be used as an emergency fire exit. Consult your local law enforcement agency or fire department regarding its use. If used in your home, a key should be left in the inside cylinder whenever the home is occupied.

When installing a deadbolt, attach the strike plate (the jamb fastening that receives the bolt in the locking position) to the door with four to six, three-inch brass wood screws. The screws should penetrate through the frame to a structural member.

Both single and double key cylinder deadbolt locks should meet the following criteria to be a good security device.

- The bolt must extend a minimum of one inch and contain a hardened steel insert.
- The deadbolt should contain a cylinder guard to prohibit twisting of the lock with a wrench or pliers. It must be solid metal — not hollow casting or stamped metal.
- The keyway should contain a five-pin tumbler system to make it more difficult to pick.
- The connecting screws that hold the lock together must be on the inside and made of case-hardened steel. No screw heads should be exposed on the outside.
- The connecting screws must be at least one-fourth inch in diameter and go into solid metal stock, not screw posts.

The security deadbolt lock can be used on any hinge door where the strike plate can be securely fastened to the door frame. These locks come in double key cylinder and inside thumb-operated models.

Locks for double doors

Double doors require additional locking devices. Many homes with double doors use half-barrel slidebolts on the inactive door. *These are weak and inadequate.* Flush bolts installed at the top and bottom of the inactive door of a pair of doors offer *additional security* since the intruder cannot get at these devices to tamper with them if the doors are locked. It is important that the bolts have at least one inch of throw and that they protrude well into the top frame and threshold. Additionally, the strike plates should be well secured with at least three-inch brass wood screws.

Locks for dutch doors

Dutch doors can be secured by adding a deadbolt lock to both the lower and upper door.

Security for doors with glass

If any exterior door has a glass window or if there is other glass within 40 inches of the lock you may use security screening, decorative grilles or burglary-rated glazing. Use nonremovable screws to securely mount screens or grilles.

Sliding glass doors

Sliding glass doors present a major security problem if they do not have the proper locks and if special steps are not taken to prevent removal of the door.

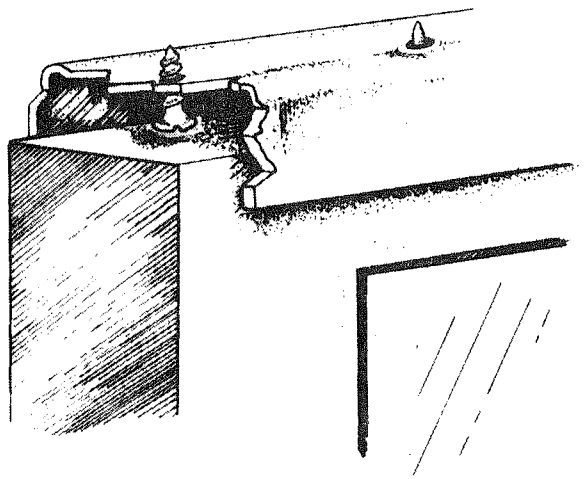
A sliding glass door is lifted into position when installed and, therefore, must be lifted from the track to be removed. To prevent this, insert #8 or #10 sheet metal screws into the top of the door frame at both ends and the middle. Adjust these screws so that the door barely clears them when it is operated.

If properly inserted, this will take up the slack between the upper part of the door and the interior frame.

It is important to note that dowels alone placed in the door track will not prevent a burglar from removing the sliding door.

The best lock for a sliding glass door is operable by a key from the inside. The lock bolt should engage the strike sufficiently so that it will not be disengaged by any amount of movement. When the existing inside pull has to be changed in order to accommodate a new deadlock, an inside cylinder pull is recommended as a replacement. A single lock is *not* recommended because of the softness of aluminum frames.

A supplemental lock should be installed at the top or bottom, made out of steel and inserted in the sliding door at a slightly downward angle.



Garage doors

Garage doors should always be closed and locked whenever you are away from home. This prevents burglars from access to tools which they could use to force entry into your home; it also prevents the opportunity to steal automobiles, tools, ladders (for access to two-story windows), bicycles and other property.

Use a good quality padlock to secure your garage door. There are many padlocks on the market from which to choose. Some can even be keyed to your house key. Do not be guilty of economizing on a padlock that will not give you the protection you need. The most common assault on a padlock is with a large bolt cutter or pry bar. Some padlocks have built-in shackle guards which make them difficult to attack with bolt cutters. The following description, which you can take to the locksmith or hardware store is the *minimum standard* for an exterior padlock:

- Case-hardened steel, 9/32 inch shackle. (Naturally, heavier shackles offer additional security.) Stainless steel shackles offer the ultimate in padlock security.
- Double-locking mechanism — heel and toe.
- Five-pin tumbler.
- *A key retaining feature, whenever possible.* This prevents you from removing the key until you have locked the padlock.

Most combination padlocks are poor security. The bodies of these locks are very weak.

Never leave your padlock unlocked. This is an invitation to have the padlock removed so that a key can be made and the lock returned to its original location. Later the burglar returns when no one is home and enters at his or her leisure, using that key.

Some padlocks have the key code number printed on them. This should be filed off.

Otherwise, a burglar can go to a locksmith, give the brand/number and buy a duplicate key.

For overhead sectional rollup doors, drill a hole of proper size in the door track, just above one of the guide rollers while the door is in the closed position, and install a padlock. Many doors are installed with predrilled holes that will accommodate this security feature without having to drill. Or, install eyebolts on the inside top of the garage door and the door frame. When the garage door is closed, a padlock can secure the bolts and prevent opening of the door.

Electric garage door openers

An electric garage door opener should have steel gears and chain activation. Periodically check the door to make sure it is adjusted to prevent the bottom from being lifted up. This stops the thief from crawling under the door.

Cane bolts can be installed on the inside of the door. These can only be locked from the inside. Sliding hasps can also be used on the inside of the door.

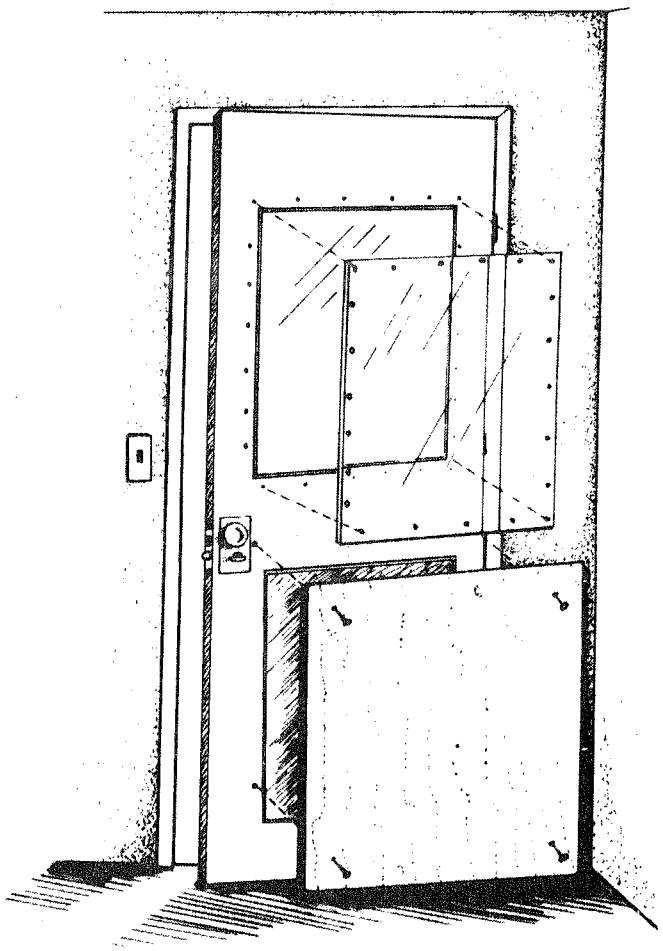
Hardened steel hasps and padlocks are recommended to secure both sides of a lifting garage door. This is to prevent the lifting of the opposite side and crawling in under the door. A hasp must be of hardened steel and installed with carriage bolts through the door. Use large washers on the inside. After the nuts are secured, deface the threads of the bolt ends with a hammer to keep the nuts from being removed.

When installing hasps, make sure that the mounting screws are covered when the hasp is locked.

If you use garage windows for ventilation, install the same security items as recommended for the windows in your home. Hang curtains or miniblinds to prevent a potential burglar from "window shopping" for valuables.

Other garage doors

The weakest link in an attached garage is usually the side (rear) door. Doors with window panes or thin veneer wood or no deadbolt locks should be considered a primary entry for a burglar. Take measures to make this door as secure as the front door. In most cases, it is easier to either replace the door or use plywood on the interior to reinforce the existing wood panel, or to replace the glass with burglary resistant glazing to prevent entry through the window.



IMPORTANT: A burglar who gets into your garage can take as much time as necessary to gain entry to your home through the connecting door because it is out of sight. In addition, most garages offer burglars a wide selection of tools which can be used to gain entry.

Sliding windows

Sliding windows should be secured by the same methods used for the sliding doors. Both the pan head top screws and the bracing devices are effective on this type of window, if the slider is on the inside. Several types of auxiliary locks are available for installation which offer improved security.

Casement windows (crank type)

These windows are the easiest to secure. Make sure the locking latch works properly and the crank which opens and closes the window has no excessive play. Replace any worn hardware. Key lock handles are available, if you desire. If window is not normally opened or closed, remove crank handle.

Louvered windows

It is best to replace louvered windows with another type. Metal grating may also be used as long as it is secured with large bolts, preventing the bars or grating from being torn free from their mount.

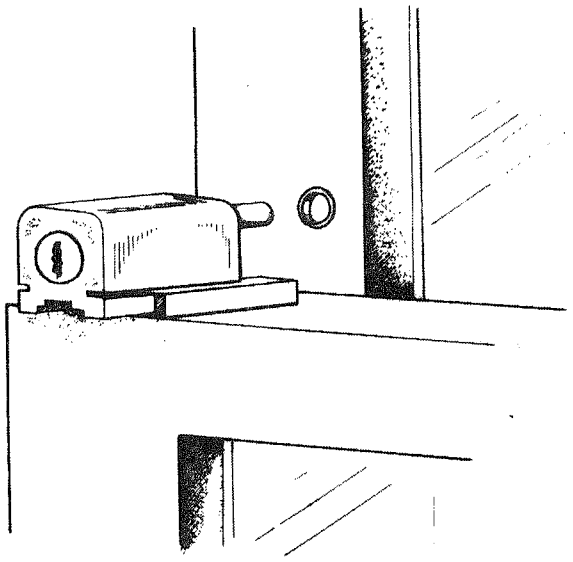
For the interim period of waiting for the replacement window or installation of bars, you might want to secure the window by:

- Removing each individual pane of glass and sanding the glass and metal frame where the two meet and;
- Applying a two-part epoxy resin glue to the sanded area. Replace the piece of glass into the framework.

Double-hung sash-type windows

To secure these windows, drill a hole that angles slightly downward through a *top corner* of the bottom window into the *bottom* of the top window, on both sides. Then place an eyebolt or eight penny nail into the hole to prevent the window from being opened. Auxiliary latches may also be purchased.

The most effective protection for double-hung windows is a key-locking security sash lock. If possible, mount the lock with two-inch wood screws.



Basement windows

Basement windows are one of the most common points of entry for burglars. Special attention should be paid to securing them.

Basement windows, often hidden by bushes or trees, provide burglars with an ideal place to work unobserved. Such windows should be replaced with plexiglass or polycarbonate, or reinforced with decorative security bars.

Grilles

For extremely vulnerable windows, heavy-gauge metal ornamental grilles may be used. Grilles should be attached with one-way screws or fastened from the inside.

WARNING: Use caution to assure that bars or gratings do not create a fire hazard. Bars and gratings are not recommended for sleeping rooms. If they are used, however, they must have an inside mechanism that allows them to swing out in an emergency.

Alarms

An alarm system can contribute to your home's security. However, do not depend only upon an alarm to protect you.

There are many types of alarms on the market. Before deciding what type of system to install, check with your local law enforcement agency to determine if there is an alarm ordinance in your area. Entire alarm systems may be leased or purchased from professional state licensed alarm companies and are also available from electrical and hardware dealers.

Installation of a system by a well-established, professional alarm company in your community will save you money in service calls. Get several estimates and then decide which alarm company and system is best for your needs. You may wish to consult with your local Better Business Bureau to determine which companies are reputable in your community.

Any alarm system should include:

- A fail-safe battery backup.
- Fire-sensing capability (ionization sensors are best).
- Readout ability to check the working of the system. Test your alarm periodically if your system has that feature.
- Horn-sounding device.

Most residential alarms emit a loud noise from a bell, siren or tone generator. An audible alarm on doors and windows can be an effective deterrent to the amateur burglar. Make sure that your family understands how the alarm operates and notify your neighbors that you have installed an alarm. Make sure that they are aware of the alarm's sound and that it is loud enough to be heard in your neighbors' homes. Family and neighbors should be trained to call your law enforcement agency when they hear the alarm.

Do not have a dialer alarm system call the police or sheriff's department. This is illegal in most jurisdictions. An automatic dialer to a central reporting station is a good alternative in rural locations or where most neighbors are gone during the day at work.

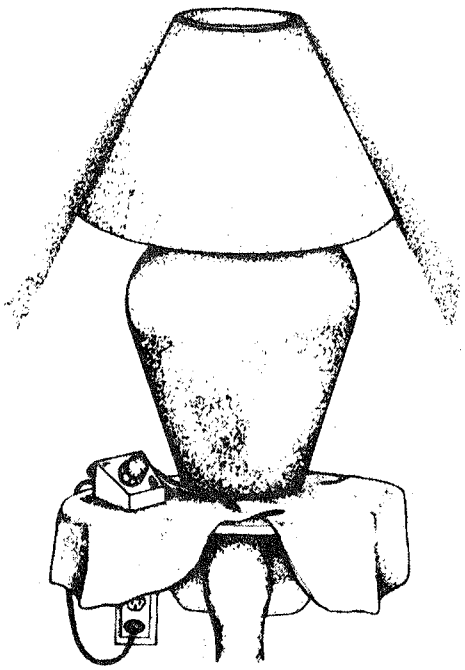
Do not depend only upon an alarm to protect you. Be sure to use the proper locking devices and join a Neighborhood Watch program in your area.

Dogs

The value of a dog to warn an intruder is controversial. While a dog may or may not bark at an intruder, the mere presence of the dog may discourage the burglar. However, a dog is not a sure method of discouraging burglars. Under no circumstances should you rely on a dog as your only means of burglary prevention.

Make it look as if you're home

Maintaining an appearance of occupancy, even when your residence is vacant, is essential to thwarting burglary attempts. Timers can automatically regulate the interior lighting of a home to create such a deception. Timers



should be used while you are on vacation, when you are out to dinner or even during the day while you are at work.

One type of automatic timer has a 24-hour dial and allows you to set an on-and-off time to coincide with normal light usage in your home. These timers simply plug into the wall, and the lamp you want to use is plugged into the timer.

For the most realistic deception, several timers and lamps should be used to simulate occupancy. For instance, a radio and lamp in the living room might be on from 6:30 p.m. until 11:00. At 11:00 a lamp might go on in the bathroom until 11:30. Then a bedroom lamp would be on from 11:30 to midnight. This would indicate to anyone watching the house that it was occupied.

During the day, leave drapes and shades in their normal position — the way you have them when at home. (And do not leave easily stolen valuables in sight close to windows!)

House numbers

Make sure that police, fire and paramedics can find your home in a time of emergency. Have your house numbers clearly mounted on a high contrast background. Each number should be at least four inches. Have the numbers illuminated *all* night. Also, your house number should be painted on the center of the driveway next to the street.

Does your police or sheriff's department have a helicopter patrol? If so, on the rear section of your roof, add your house numbers so that the helicopter patrol can locate your residence from the air. The numbers should be two feet high and a contrasting color with the background. A direction arrow and number can show the increase in house number addresses.

Exterior lighting

Exterior lighting is extremely important in residential security. Each exterior doorway should be lighted from dusk to dawn so a burglar can't hide and break in. Yards and windows should be lighted. Yard lights and entrance lights can be equipped with sensors that turn the light on at dusk and off at dawn or when it detects motion. Night blind spots can be eliminated by use of ornamental porch and yard lamp posts.

Landscaping

Keep doorways, windows and porches clear when planting bushes and flowers. Remember that the bushes that provide you with privacy also give a burglar a place to hide.

Prune large trees. Low limbs can provide second-story access. A well-maintained lawn is a very effective clue that someone is at home and cares. Plan your landscaping with both privacy and security in mind. Consider planting thorny bushes and shrubs near windows and along fences.

Locked gates and well-maintained fences can make break-ins more difficult and prevent the removal of large items.

Walks and driveways should be easily seen so no landscaping offers concealment for intruders.

What else you should know

Now that you have read about how to secure your home, there are a few things to know about your own personal security in your home.

PERSONAL SECURITY

Know who is there

All homeowners should be able to see a caller *before* opening the door. An inexpensive door viewer which allows you to see a wide area through use of a "fish-eye" lens can be easily installed. *This should be considered a must for all homes.*

Do not allow strangers in your house. Many rapes and robberies occur in the victim's home. In addition, burglars sometimes try to come into a home in order to assess valuables and your home security to plan a burglary when you are not home. Ask repair personnel and others who claim to have business inside to show you their identification through the door viewer. If you have the slightest doubt, telephone their office, getting the number from your directory. When you do admit a service or a salesperson you were expecting, do not leave them alone at any time.

If someone knocks on your door and asks to use your telephone to call an ambulance or tow truck, ask them to wait *outside* your home while you place the call. Be cautious even if you are told it is an emergency.

Emergency telephone numbers

Police, fire and paramedics' emergency telephone numbers should be listed on each phone in your home. Telephone stickers with these numbers are available from the police, sheriff or fire departments.

If you have a babysitter for your children, make sure he/she is aware of what to do in an emergency. Write down your address and phone number next to the emergency telephone numbers. If he/she needs immediate assistance, the sitter will be able to tell emergency vehicles the location of your residence.

If you interrupt a burglar

Do not go looking for a confrontation with a burglar. If you come home to find a door or window unexpectedly open, do not go in. Instead, go quickly to a nearby home and phone the police. If you hear or see a prowler in or around your home, *do not investigate yourself . . . call 911 immediately.*

How long it takes for a patrol car to reach your home in an emergency varies from community to community. Be patient. Expect the police to come silently as they will be trying to cut off the intruder's escape.

Despite whatever precautions you might take, a situation may arise where you find yourself face to face with a burglar. If you will think about such a situation and rehearse a few simple steps, you may save yourself or family from serious injury.

The burglar may be high on drugs or in a frightened state of mind, perhaps desperate. A scream may cause the intruder to flee, but if the person is armed, it may also cause the person to attack. Unless you are far enough away to have an excellent chance of escape, stand motionless. Most law enforcement officers will recommend that you be polite and cooperative if a burglar is in your home and asks you for your valuables.

Never struggle with a burglar unless you are clearly in danger of serious physical harm. If you are forced to defend yourself, go all out. Scream, kick, gouge — use your hands, feet and teeth to inflict as much pain as possible. If possible, use a nearby object as a weapon and continue screaming throughout the struggle. But again a caution: *never struggle with a burglar unless it is clearly the last and only course of action.*

Home Security Checklist

Use this as a guide as you check your home for safety measures. Boxes marked "no" indicate areas where you could take action to improve your home's security. These are just some of the steps you can take to decrease the likelihood that you or your home is targeted.

Exterior Doors

	Yes	No
All doors are locked at night and every time we leave the house—even if it's just for a few minutes.	☐	☐
Doors are solid hardwood or metal-clad.	☐	☐
Doors feature wide-angle peepholes at heights everyone can use.	☐	☐
If there are glass panels in or near our doors, they are reinforced in some way so that they cannot be shattered.	☐	☐
All entryways have a working, keyed entry lock and sturdy deadbolt lock installed into the frame of the door.	☐	☐
Spare keys are kept with a trusted neighbor, not under a doormat or planter, on a ledge, or in the mailbox.	☐	☐

Garage and Sliding Door Security

The door leading from the attached garage to the house is solid wood or metal-clad and protected with a quality keyed door lock and deadbolt.	☐	☐
The overhead garage door has a lock so that we do not rely solely on the automatic door opener to provide security.	☐	☐
Garage doors are all locked when leaving the house.	☐	☐
The sliding glass door has a strong, working key locks.	☐	☐
A dowel or a pin to secure a glass door has been installed to prevent the door from being shoved aside or lifted off the track.	☐	☐
The sliding door is locked every night and each time we leave the house.	☐	☐

Protecting Windows

Every window in the house has a working key lock or is securely pinned.	☐	☐
Windows are always locked, even when they are opened a few inches for ventilation.	☐	☐

Outdoor Security

Shrubs and bushes are trimmed so there is no place for someone to hide.	☐	☐
There are no dark areas around our house, garage, or yard at night that would hide prowlers.	☐	☐
Every outside door has a bright, working light to illuminate visitors.	☐	☐

continued on back

Floodlights are used appropriately to ensure effective illumination.	☐	☐
Outdoor lights are on in the evening—whether someone is at home or not or a photocell or motion-sensitive lighting system has been installed.	☐	☐
Our house number is clearly displayed so police and other emergency vehicles can find the house quickly.	☐	☐

Security When Away From Home

	Yes	No
At least two light timers have been set to turn the lights on and off in a logical sequence, when we are away from home for an extended time period.	☐	☐
The motion detector or other alarm system (if we have one) has been activated when we leave home.	☐	☐
Mail and newspaper deliveries have been stopped or arrangements for a neighbor/ friend to pick them up have been made when we go away from home for a period of time.	☐	☐
A neighbor has been asked to tend the yard and watch our home when we are away.	☐	☐

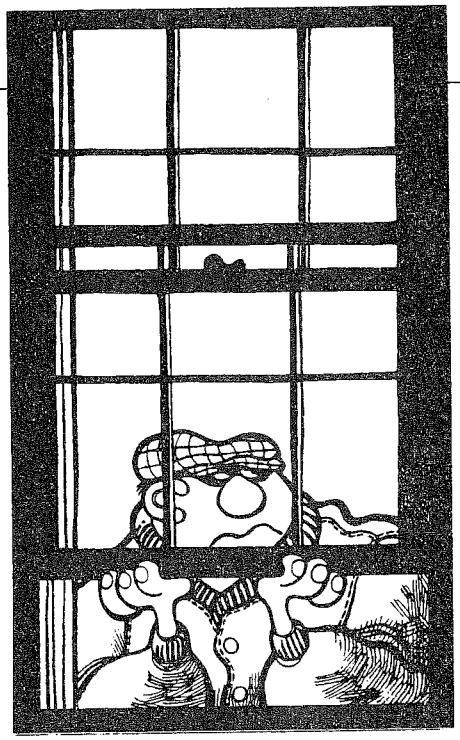
Outdoor Valuables and Personal Property

	Yes	No
Gate latches, garage doors, and shed doors are all locked with high-security, laminated padlocks.	☐	☐
Gate latches, garage doors, and shed doors are locked after every use.	☐	☐
Grills, lawn mowers, and other valuables are stored in a locked garage or shed, or if left out in the open, are hidden from view with a tarp and securely locked to a stationary point.	☐	☐
Every bicycle is secured with a U-bar lock or quality padlock and chain.	☐	☐
Bikes are always locked, even if we leave them for just a minute.	☐	☐
Firearms are stored unloaded and locked in storage boxes and secured with trigger guard locks.	☐	☐
Valuable items, such as television, stereos, and computers have been inscribed with identifying number approved by local police.	☐	☐
Our home inventory is up-to-date and includes pictures. A complete copy is kept somewhere out of the house.	☐	☐

Name _____ Driver's License # Inscribed _____

OPERATION IDENTIFICATION
Inventory List

Item	Model No.	Mfg. Serial No.	Where Marked	Size	Color	Physical Description



Home Safety Handbook

Office of the Attorney General

Crime Prevention Center

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE