

Safety Tips

You can help protect your home and your family by following safety guidelines. Here are a few that can minimize your risks and give you peace of mind.



Protect your doors. Statistics show that 80% of all break-ins are through a door. Keep your doors locked during the day if you are at home alone. Install dead-bolt locks. Simple door locks are easy to get past, and offer virtually no protection.



Keep your doors visible and well lit. Install motion detector activated floodlights. These will turn on anytime someone comes within a determined range of your doors and will go on only at night. You may also install photoelectric floodlights that will turn your lights on automatically at dusk and off at dawn.



Install a door viewer that will allow you to see who is at the door without opening it. Also, ask for identification if service people come to your home. Call the company for verification if you have any doubts.



Mark all your valuables, tools and electronic equipment with a permanent etching of your name and other identification mark of your choice. This helps identify property and makes it harder for a thief to sell.



If you see a suspicious vehicle on your street, jot down the license plate number. If you suspect criminal activity, call the police immediately to report it. You can remain anonymous if you so wish.



Keep important papers and documents in a safe deposit box. Purchase a home safe that can be bolted to the floor to safeguard your jewelry and sensitive papers. Some home safes are rated for fire and theft and will protect your valuables in case of fire or break-in.



Have your mail and paper delivery stopped if you will be out of town for two days or more. Criminals will immediately notice an accumulation of newspapers and mail and oftentimes target such homes.



Don't hide a spare key in the mailbox, over the doorway or under the mat. These are the first places a thief will look.



Don't leave a note on the door, saying that you're gone. You don't want to announce to the world that your house is empty.



Don't keep a lot of cash in your house. It is easy to get instant cash from ATM's. Therefore, there is no need to keep too much money in your home.



Don't enter the house if you arrive home and see any signs of a break-in. Call the police and let them go inside first. This is for your safety.



For the ultimate in-home security, you may want to consider an electronic alarm system. These systems typically include a combination of door and window sensors and motion detectors. They also provide smoke detectors in case of fire.

You can invest under \$100 for a simple do-it-yourself kit, or more for sophisticated systems. You can also use monitoring services for a monthly fee for more elaborate protection. With a monitored system you have the assurance that someone is "watching" your home at all times. . However, you must remember to set the alarm when you leave the house. No matter what kind of system you decide to install, be sure to arm it anytime you are away from home, even for just one hour. Most break-ins take place during the day when people are out of the house. A home security system can also earn you a discount on your homeowner's insurance, and will certainly pay off in peace of mind for you and your family.