

How To Make Your Home Safer!

**A Special Report
Compliments Of...**

Nevada Benefits Corporation

Las Vegas

9505 Hillwood Dr., Ste 100
Las Vegas, Nevada 89134
Phone- (702) 258-1995
Fax- (702) 877-0956

Reno

One East Liberty 6th Floor
Reno, NV 89504
Phone- (775) 686-6010
Fax- (775) 201-1326

How To Make Your Home Safer!

Like most people, while you don't like to talk or think about crime, it's rising in the United States, as well as throughout other parts of the world.

The number of burglars, muggers, auto thieves, robbers, purse-snatchers, and so on, is growing at an alarming rate.

And crime is invading what once was considered "safe communities."

According to the U.S. Crime Bureau...

A Home Is Burglarized Every 10 Seconds In America!

This works out to 360 home break-ins each hour, 8,640 each day, 60,480 each week, 241,920 each month... or 2,903,040 each year!

Single family homes are twice as likely to be burglarized than apartments. (While receiving a lot of publicity when it happens, hotels and motels account for less than 3% of all burglaries.)

The most likely things to be stolen in a burglary are: cash, small electronic equipment, home computers, cameras, jewelry, furs, tools and hand guns.

Unfortunately, people usually don't protect themselves properly until something happens to them, or a neighbor. The public's complacent attitude is a burglar's best friend, and your worst enemy.

There are many things you can do to make your home safer. This report will get you started on the right road.

Remember, the two things a burglar fears the most are: (1) being seen, and (2) having to take too much time to finish the crime.

While burglars typically "target" a home when no one is there, if you surprise one in the act, your chances of being injured are high, so don't try to intervene. Statistics have shown many homeowners who tried to defend themselves, their family members or their property with a weapon... usually ended up having their own weapon turned on them.

The first step to making your home safer is to...

Get A Security Survey Done

Many local law enforcement agencies will give you a free “walk through” of your property. The purpose is to identify all potential trouble spots and to figure out how to improve the overall security of your property.

You can probably organize a “block party” and have the police “sweep” your entire block. The drawback is, however, because of cost-cutting many local law enforcement agencies are stretched to the limit, and so you may have to wait for a while for an appointment.

Sometimes off-duty police officers will do this kind of work for a small fee. Or you could hire a third party security company to do the survey for you.

Put Yourself In A Burglar’s Shoes

You may consider putting yourself in a burglar’s shoes once or twice a year. Walk around your property with a close friend or neighbor who is not too familiar with your house. Start from the outside and ask yourself, “*How would I best break in?*” Also, ask your friend this question... “*How would you break in my house if you were a professional burglar?*”

The reason you examine your home security with a friend is he or she may be able to spot things that you may overlook. After you’ve done, return the favor and do a security survey for your friend.

Besides the obvious “lived-in” look, avoid only doing certain things when you’re not home, which, unfortunately, is what a lot of people do. For example, some people leave their tools or their children’s toys lying in the front yard when they’re at home, and only put them away when they’re going away.

In many cases, you can probably tell if one of your neighbors, even someone who lives several houses from yours, isn’t home by just looking at his or her property, right?

Well, unfortunately, most burglars, especially the professionals ones, are very good at doing the same thing. That’s one of their jobs. Some dead giveaways are...

- **Always closing the drapes ONLY when you’re not home**
- Having no garbage cans out on collection day, or an empty can sitting at the curb
- **Closing up the house as tight as a drum in the hot summer months without the air-conditioner running**
- Turning on a certain light or two and every other room is in total darkness
- **Picking up all the children’s toys**
- Taking in the dog
- **Shutting the garage door if you usually leave it open**
- Turning off the lawn sprinkler

If you use an answering machine, don’t say you’re not home. Instead, say something like, “*I (we) can’t come to the phone right now, please leave a message.*”

And, if you don't have an answering machine, then make sure you turn down the volume on all your phones before leaving. This way, no one can hear your phone ringing from outside.

At the end of this report, you'll discover how to protect your home when you're away.

Here Are Some Effective Ways To Deter Burglars

As you may be aware, a dog is one of the best burglar deterrents. A dog that has a menacing bark will scare away a lot of would-be burglars. This isn't because they don't know what kind of dog you have and what risk it would be to them if they tried to break in, it's rather because a noisy dog will create disturbances and get other people's attention, which is the last thing a burglar wants.

Even if you don't have a dog, you can always pretend to have one. Simply hang a *Beware of Dog* sign on your fence or put a doghouse in your backyard. Believe it or not, even a loose dog chain or bowl could drive away a potential burglar.

A warning: Be careful about buying a cheap electronic "dog" that barks nonstop if intruders trip a relay or otherwise signals their presence. Most experienced prowlers are familiar with these devices and won't be fooled or scared away.

Besides the typical house alarm systems for windows and doors, electronic devices that are effective are infrared or motion detectors that sense movement or the heat given off by a human or animal body. Anyone approaching too close will trigger any number of these devices.

The most effective are powerful lights or burglar horns that either flood the area with light or fill the air with a deafening sound without notice. Just like a barking dog, the would-be burglar will usually leave because they're afraid of being discovered.

To be effective, you must set the sensitivity of such devices at the right level. This way, stray animals won't set them off too often, which may irritate you as well as your neighbors. Also, be sure to place these devices high enough so they can't be easily turned off or broken.

How To Choose A Burglar Alarm

While a barking dog is one of the best burglar deterrents, it can't always be depended upon. Some professional burglars have been known to carry delicious "dog snacks" in their pockets. And, with a full stomach, some dogs make friends easily and forget their purpose of guarding the premises.

Besides, if you don't have a dog, then it won't do you any good.

So, how do you protect your family in this case? With a burglar alarm system.

Today, you have many burglar alarms to choose from. A good one should include:

- A battery-powered fail-safe back-up
- **Fire-sensing capability**

- Read-out ability to check working of system
- **Horn sounding device installed in attic through vent**

Before you buy an alarm system, make sure to...

1. Get estimates from three alarm companies, telling each one you're doing so.
2. Get an audible alarm instead of a silent one. Better yet, you may consider paying a little bit extra for an alarm system that can be monitored 24 hours a day by a monitoring facility.

How To Burglar-Proof Your Doors

Since you shouldn't depend entirely upon an alarm system to protect you and your family, you need to make sure your doors are as secure as possible.

Illegal entry through the front door occurs more often than all other points of entry combined!

All exterior doors should be of solid hard wood or steel reinforced. And the doorframes should be in good condition, constructed of quality materials.

Pay special attention to the door jams. Most, even the ones in expensive homes, are made out of cheap pine. It doesn't take much force to "kick in" the door even if it's protected with dead bolts, if the strike plate is attached with only a couple of 1/2 or 3/4 inch screws.

So install 2-1/2 to 3-inch stainless steel or nickel-plated screws in all exterior door jams. Be sure the screws go at least 1-3/4 inch deep into the underlying framing lumber.

And, while you at it, consider getting heavy-duty strike plates or a door-reinforcer kit sold in most large home improvement centers. While you may have to chisel out more of the door jam to install, it's worth the effort for the greater protection you'll get.

You can further protect your door from being kicked in by installing a device on the floor that the door rests against on the inside center when shut, and swings away when the door opens.

Any kind of sliding glass door is a favorite target for burglars. So install several screws into the door's upper track to guard against the door being lifted up and out. Open and shut the door through its entire range just enough for the screw's head to protrude, giving you free movement without allowing the door to be removed.

As you may be aware, just placing a stick in the door track makes the door harder for a burglar to break in.

Your garage door can be easily picked unless you have an electronic garage-door system. With such a device, it's very hard for anyone, even most professional burglars, to force open your garage door from the outside without breaking through the actual door panels.

The best way for a burglar to get into your house through your garage is to use your garage door remote control. So, some burglars actually break into cars parked at a shopping mall, for example, and steal the garage door remote control, get the address from the insurance paper, and then drive to that person's house to commit a crime.

To avoid this situation from happening to you, keep your garage-door remote control out of sight, such as in your locked-glove compartment, when you park your car away from home.

While it's possible for a burglar to enter the same security code as your remote control into another one and open your door with it, with so many combinations, chances are good that the burglar won't waste the time trying all the possibilities.

Please keep in mind, after installing a new garage-door opener, make sure you change the security code from the factory settings, which are almost always set to zeros.

How To Burglar-Proof Your Windows

To get inside your home, burglars usually break windows as a last resort (or by accident).

When they do, they usually cut a hole in the window and then slip in a thin stiff wire to unlock the locking device.

Most double hung windows have cheap locks which should be replaced by heavy duty sash locks or even keyed locks, if you don't mind a little inconvenience.

An old trick is to install a small eyebolt in either corner. When done correctly, the window can't be opened, with the eyebolt in place from the outside.

Like some homeowners, you could also screw the window shut by drilling a hole through the frame. But this would defeat the purpose of having a window, and present a fire hazard. So this method is not recommended.

The safest windows are glass block. While they're almost impossible to break through, they can't be opened and aren't as pleasing to look at. So you may consider using them only in the basement or in areas at or near ground level.

Another good protection for windows is to install roll-a-way electric security shutters, or decorative security grates. The drawback with this is that they could prevent your escape through your windows in case of a fire. However, newer models installed on tracks or the ones that can be easily pushed open from the inside, make it easier for you to escape through your windows in case of an emergency.

Here are the types of glass that most burglars avoid breaking because they don't want to attract attention...

- Laminated Glass is made by a vinyl or plastic interlayer sandwiched between two layers of glass. This type of glass makes your windows stronger. To get in, a burglar would have to hit the glass repeatedly in the same spot in order to make a small opening.
- Tempered Glass is made by placing a piece of regular glass in an oven, bringing it almost to the melting point, and then chilling it rapidly. This causes a skin to form around the glass. Fully tempered glass is four to five times stronger than regular glass.
- Wired Glass is stronger than regular glass and is a visible deterrent for burglars. Just like laminated glass, burglars usually don't want to break wired glass because they'd have to hit very hard to break it, and so the noise may attract other's attention.
- Plastic comes in two types: Acrylic and Polycarbonate. The acrylics, which are commonly called plexiglass, are ten times stronger than regular glass of the same thickness. Polycarbonate sheets are stronger than acrylics and are about 250 times stronger than safety glass, and about 20 times stronger than other transparent plastic.

Take Inventory Of Your Household Items

While the security measure we've discussed will make your home safer, unfortunately, if professional burglars really want to get into your home, then, no matter how secure your house is, they'll eventually be able to get in.

So, to help the police and other law enforcement agencies and also to help speed up your insurance claims, you should keep a detailed household inventory of all your valuables.

Whenever possible, "mark" your high-valued items with a permanent identifying mark. You can rent simple tools to engrave important information, such as serial numbers or some other unique labels, into your valuables like computers, TVs, and so on.

Remember, most burglars steal other peoples' things in order to sell them for cash, often to buy illegal drugs. So, if they see you've etched your belongings, such as your TVs, VCRs, computers, with permanent marks, then they may not want to steal them. This is because they would have to do too much work to sell them. Besides, they don't want to take a chance of being caught.

You may consider taking pictures or video pictures, or both, of every room in your home, as well as any buildings not attached to your house. And then keep the pictures, together with your inventory list and purchase receipts, in a safety deposit box at a bank.

Okay, right now, please take whatever time necessary to complete the following security checklist. And, if you have any weak areas, then fix them as soon as possible so your home will be safer.

How To Reduce Crime In Your Neighborhood

You, as a resident, can work with your neighbors to help reduce the crime rate. Working together, you can get the criminals off your neighborhood and out of your area.

By organizing or joining a neighborhood program in which you and your neighbors get together to learn how to protect yourselves, your families, your homes, and your personal belongings.

There's safety in numbers and power through working with a group. You'll get to know your neighbors better. Working with them, you can...

- Reduce crime
- Develop a more united community
- Provide an avenue of communications between police and citizens
- Establish on-going crime prevention techniques in your neighborhood
- Renew citizen interest in community activity

“Citizens Safety Projects” are set up to help you do this. It's a joint effort between private citizens and the local police. Such programs are available all over the country. Maybe one already exists in your community.

These groups gather citizens together to learn crime prevention from local authorities. You cooperate with your neighbors to report suspicious activities in the neighborhood, to keep an eye on homes when the resident is away, and to keep everyone in the area mindful of the standard precautions that should always be taken.

Statistics have shown most criminals avoid neighborhoods where such groups exist.

Through cooperation with the local law enforcement agencies, some of the things you'll learn from a citizen safety group are:

- **What to do in an emergency**
- How to best identify a suspicious person
- **How to identify a vehicle being used in a suspected criminal activity**
- What signs to watch out for before entering a house or apartment that may be in the process of being burglarized
- **What to do in case of injury**
- What to do about suspicious people loitering on your street
- **How to identify stolen merchandise**
- How to recognize auto theft in progress
- **How to protect your house or apartment**
- How to recognize a burglary in progress
- **How to protect yourself and family**
- And, much more

It's easy to get your group started. Simply contact your neighbors and arrange a date, place and time for the first meeting. You can either hold the meetings at your home or a neighbor's. Set up a time that's convenient for most of your neighbors.

After that, call your local police department. They'll be happy to give your group informal lectures, free literature and, in many instances, window stickers and I.D. cards.

Keep in mind, since police officers can't be everywhere, your cooperation with them is for the benefit of you, your family, your neighbors, and your neighborhood.

How To Protect Your Home While You're Away

As simple as this may sound, locking up all your doors is one of the best security measures. Many home break-ins happened because the owners simply forgot to lock one or more of their doors.

When you're going out for a short time, such as to the market or dinner, make your house look or sound like somebody is home, such as leaving the radio or TV on. You may consider buying a timer that can turn your lights on and off automatically while you're away.

Be careful not to leave a note on your front door that may tell a potential burglar that nobody is home. And, never leave your door key under a flowerpot or the doormat, inside an unlocked mailbox, over the doorway, or in other obvious places. Instead, give it to a neighbor.

Before you're going away for a vacation, stop your normal home deliveries, such as newspaper or milk, by phone or in person. Or, ask someone to pick them up for you everyday. Also, ask a neighbor to pick up your mail, including all the junk mail, every day.

Let your neighbors know how long you're going to be away, and leave a key with them so they can check your home, changing the positions of your shades and blinds every few days.

Before entering your front door, check around your property. And, if you find a door or window has been forced or broken while you were away, DO NOT ENTER. The criminal may still be inside.

Go to a neighbor's house and call the police from there. And, wait for them to come before you go into your home.

Your Home Security And Safety Check List

Answer these questions fully to find out how secure your home is right now. This way, after you've identified the weak areas, you then can improve your home security.

General Security

Have you arranged to have member of a law enforcement agency do a professional survey?

Are the trees and shrubs pruned and well maintained to prevent anyone from hiding unseen?

Do any trees or down pipes provide easy access to upper floors?

If you have skylights, can they be removed from the outside or easily broken?

Do you keep ladders or tools that may help a potential intruder?

Are you keeping a house key outside the house where a burglar can find it easily?

Do you have enough light around the outside doorway areas?

Can your main entrance be seen from the street?

Are your exterior doors at least 1-3/4 inch thick and made from solid wood or reinforced with metal?

Do all exterior doors have heavy-duty dead bolts and reinforced door jams?

Can anyone get inside your home through a dryer vent or pet entrance?

If doors have glass panels can someone break through and defeat the locking device?

Have all sliding glass doors been protected from being easily lifted out from their frames?

Are all exterior lights and security devices in good working order and protected from breakage?

Does the door from the attached garage leading to the house have a deadbolt lock?

Does your overhead door have a working electronic door opener?

Does your overhead door have any loose, broken or missing door panels or hardware?

Do you keep the overhead doors closed, and your car locked inside the garage?

Do all windows have reinforced locking devices that can be secured in the open position?

Do all screens and storm windows have reinforced locks?

Do ground level windows have guards or grates?

Are basement windows or glass block protected by grates or security devices?

Do you have a complete and current video tape or pictures of all your valuables off-site?

Fire Prevention and Safety

Is your heating system in proper working order and inspected for dangerous leaks yearly?

Is there enough air circulation around appliances that are likely to overheat?

Any overloaded circuits, long extension cords runs, too many devices plugged unto one outlet?

Are fireplaces and chimney free of dangerous buildups that could catch on fire?

Do you have protective grate in front of fireplace to prevent sparks, hot logs from rolling into the room?

Is your kitchen oven hood free of greasy build-up that could cause a fire?

Do you have smoke detectors installed on each level of your home?

Do you replace your smoke detector batteries every 12 months or less?

Do you test your smoke detectors at least once a month?

Do you have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen, basement, or garage?

Do your family members sleep with the bedroom door closed to prevent fire or smoke from spreading?

Do your family members practice fire drill, know escape route and designated meeting place to go outside?

Do your children know how to use the phone to get help in an emergency?

Okay. In this special report, you've learned many valuable suggestions to make your home safer for you and your loved ones. Please act on the information you've learned right away.

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