

# Here are 10 Important Crime Safety Tips for Homeowners/Renters from Criminal Justice PHD

## Essential Crime Prevention Tips Every Homeowner Should Know

Courtesy of: <http://criminaljusticephd.org/crime-prevention-tips-for-homeowners/>

The National Neighborhood Watch Association suggests that homeowners looking to burglar-proof their homes should take a three-fold approach: deter, detect, and delay. Here are 10 essential crime prevention tips to help your home a less desirable target for burglary:

### **Tip #1: Case the joint.**

Walk around your home with the eyes of a burglar. Look for weaknesses—sliding doors that could be jimmed off the track, glass that could be broken to gain entry, window unit air conditioners that could be easily removed, and so forth. A committed burglar can usually find a way into a house, but you can make it more difficult for them, and this starts with knowing your property and potential entry points for a break-in. Take a walk around the outside as well and note what pricey items are in view, tempting would-be burglars.

### **Tip #2: Lock the door.**

It may seem obvious, but the BLS reports that more than 40 percent of burglaries don't include forced entry—meaning people are leaving doors and windows unlocked. Install deadbolts on all doors; double cylinders are best, since they require a key on both sides of the door, and it prevents burglars from breaking a pane of glass, reaching around, and unlocking the door. (Check your area's fire code first; some places don't allow double cylinder locks because they can trap inhabitants inside in the event of a fire.) And remember to lock the door leading from the garage to the house, even if the garage door is down. (It's easy to manipulate.)

### **Tip #3: Don't hide a key.**

One day, you forget your keys, and you decide it's a good idea to hide one under the doormat or one of those fake rocks. That's a terrible idea. Get rid of that idea right now, and pretend you never even considered it. Give a spare key to a neighbor instead. If your closest neighbor lives 10 miles away, and you absolutely must leave a spare key outside, put it in a combination lockbox.

### **Tip #4: Don't label your keys or mailbox.**

If you lose your key and it has your address written on it, well—you do the math. It's pretty easy to become a target. Also, don't write your last name on your mailbox. It's easy to look you up, find your phone numbers, maybe even your workplace, and begin to track your movements in preparation to enter the home when you're not around.

**Tip #5: Secure windows and sliding doors.**

Many sliding doors can be popped off the frame, even when locked. Prevent this by placing a strong steel bar or two-by-four in the back groove, which prevents the door from sliding along the groove and opening. You can do the same with windows: Install a nail in the frame to prevent the window from opening more than a few inches.

**Tip #6: Be modest.**

Prevent your home from being a target by tucking away expensive items. Keep both the car and the bike in the garage. After purchasing a new piece of expensive electronic equipment, dispose of the box directly instead of leaving it next to your trash can—which lets would-be burglars know you have something shiny and new that could bring in great cash on the black market. While you're at it, consider keeping expensive jewelry and your mattress full of cash somewhere safer, like a safe deposit box.

**Tip #7: Create the illusion you're always home.**

The majority of burglaries take place when people aren't home, particularly during the day, while the victims are at work. Deter burglars by creating the impression that you're always home: Leave the radio or the television on. And if you're going on vacation for awhile, don't advertise your absence. Arrange for someone to pick up the mail, newspapers, mow the lawn, shovel the snow, and set out trash cans regularly.

**Tip #8: Secure the area surrounding your house.**

Secure the yard: Trim bushes and trees to discourage burglars from using them as hiding places. Avoid planting low shrubs in front of windows; you may even consider planting thorny shrubs for an added deterrent.

**Tip #9: Get to know the neighbors.**

Tight-knit communities suffer fewer burglaries because people look out for each other and strangers stick out. If your neighborhood doesn't already have a Neighborhood Watch Program, consider starting one. Studies have found they reduce crime and violence in a given neighborhood.

**Tip #10: Install an alarm system—or at least a sign.**

Alarm systems are available at a number of price points, but an effective one should include sensors at entry points, motion detectors inside the house, and a loud outdoor alarm that alerts the entire neighborhood when someone has forced entry. If you don't want to go all-out, fake out would-be burglars by sticking a home security system sign in your yard. The threat of an alarm may be enough to keep them from trying.

***(These important home safety tips have been forwarded to you in the public interest by BernCo Neighborhood Coordination.)***