

Home Security Handbook



Dodge County Sheriff's Office
124 West St.
Juneau, WI 53039
Non-emergency 920-386-3726
Emergency 911

Introduction

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

You don't have to be a victim of burglary. Even though it is one of the most frequently committed crimes, it is preventable. Most home burglaries are done by opportunists who spot an open window, a faulty lock or a house that appears nobody is around or will be gone for a while. Many burglaries are **no force** entries because burglars walk through an unlocked door or open window.

While there is no way to completely guarantee you will never become a victim of burglary, you can reduce the chance of this happening to you. Inside this booklet is information on how you can safeguard your property. Many ways cost very little and can be done by almost any homeowner. They will also provide you with some peace of mind.

Remember – lock your doors and windows when you leave your home. If you have an alarm, **use it**. Do not become a crime statistic. Please feel free to share this information with your friends and neighbors.

Home Security Survey

No house is completely burglar proof when it comes to a professional burglar. Many would admit you can discourage them if you increase your home security. To start you need to identify the weak areas of your home and fix them.

The following checklist will assist you in systematically surveying your home. Every “**no**” check mark you make shows a weak area which may allow a burglar access to your home. If you have a weak area, this booklet should provide you with tips on how to correct it and improve your protection.

This survey will only identify your weak areas. You will be **no more** secure as when you started if you do nothing to correct those weaknesses. No security system is 100% fail proof but your goal is to make your home enough of a risk to the burglar that he decides to go elsewhere.

If you would like professional advice feel free to contact the Dodge County Sheriff's Office and request a call from one of the Community Relations team. With the increase in property crimes it is extremely important to review your home security a couple times a year.

Door and Entry Areas (Including Garage Side Doors)

- | Yes | No |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Do you plan so you don't need to "hide" a key under a doormat or similar place? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Do you know everyone who has a key to your house? Are keys still possessed by a previous owner? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Are entryways unobstructed by shrubbery and other décor to permit maximum visibility? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Are trees and shrubs trimmed to eliminate hiding places? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Are lights installed around the perimeter of your house? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Do the front, rear and side porch lights have a minimum 60 watt bulb? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Are the exterior doors of solid construction? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Do entry doors have a 190 degree wide angle viewer? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Do exterior doors have cylinder-type deadbolt locks with at least a one inch throw and beveled cylinder guard? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Do the doors without cylinder locks have a heavy bolt or some similar secure device that can be operated only from inside? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Can all of the doors (basement, porch, French, balcony) be securely locked? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 12. Do your basement doors have locks that allow you to isolate that part of your house? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Are ALL of your locks in good repair? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 14. Are the door strike plates (the jamb plate that receives the bolt) installed with at least 3 inch screws? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 15. Do all out-swing doors have locking or non-removable hinge pins? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 16. Do sliding doors have an auxiliary lock that locks both the door panels together? Or do you have a lock that locks the active side to the frame? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 17. Is the garage door secured with a padlock, hasp or other good auxiliary lock? Do you use it? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 18. Do you lock your garage door at night? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 19. Do you lock your garage door when away from home? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 20. Do you lock the garage door leading into the house? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 21. Do you lock car doors and remove the keys when parked in the garage? |

Windows

- 22. Do all windows have auxiliary locks or are they pinned?
- 23. Have you replaced or secured louvered windows?
- 24. Are window locks properly and securely mounted?
- 25. Do you keep windows locked when they are shut?
- 26. Do you have good/secure locks on garage windows?
- 27. Do you have garage windows covered with curtains/blinds?
- 28. Are you as careful of keeping basement and second floor windows secured as you are of first floor windows?

When You Are On A Trip

- 29. Do you arrange for friends/neighbors to pick up mail newspapers, other deliveries?
- 30. Do you notify a neighbor to watch your home?
- 31. Do you notify local police/sheriff's office? (vacation check)
- 32. Do you arrange for lawn maintenance?
- 33. Do you use timing devices for lights, radio and television?
- 34. Do you arrange for a neighbor to put out your garbage can and put it back?

The Next Step

Now that you have identified the weak points in your home security you can take the next step, learning about securing your home. The next section describes what you need to secure your home, what is a good lock, a good door and secure windows.

Protecting Against Entry

Many of the locks and other items described are inexpensive and can be installed yourself. Some however may require a professional to have them installed. Your local police or sheriff's office can assist with any questions you may have.

Key Control

True security begins with key control. When you moved in to your home or apartment were the locks changed? If you lose your keys, have locks re-keyed or replace the lock. Re-keying will render all prior keys useless. A locksmith can replace the tumblers in your exterior door locks.

DO NOT leave an emergency key under a door mat, on top of the door frame or any other hiding spot. Burglars know to look for these keys.

Never attach a name, address or license tag to your keys or your children's. If lost or stolen you may have an unwelcome visitor.

Keep car keys and house keys separate. Never leave your house keys with an attendant or valet when at a car wash, restaurant, etc.

Exterior Lighting

Exterior lighting is extremely important in home security. Each exterior doorway should be lighted from dusk to dawn to avoid a hiding place for a burglar to break in. Yards and windows should be lighted. Night blind spots can be eliminated by use of ornamental porch and yard lamp posts.

Yard and entrance lights can be equipped with sensors to turn them on at dusk and off at dawn or when motion is detected. Motion detectors can be beneficial as they change the environment when activated which can scare off would be burglars. Motion detectors can also be equipped with a bell or other warning device. Make sure to check motion and dusk/dawn equipment periodically to make sure they are performing properly.

Landscaping

Keep doorways, windows and porches clear when planting bushes, shrubs and flowers. Plantings can provide you with privacy but they also provide a place for someone to hide.

Prune large trees. Some burglars will climb the tree limbs to gain access to second floor windows. A well maintained lawn/yard shows the homeowner is there and cares about their property. Plan your landscaping with privacy and security in mind. Planting thorny bushes/shrubs near windows, porches and fences can discourage a burglar from using them for cover.

Locked gates and maintained fences can discourage break-ins and also make removal of large items more difficult should a break-in occur.

Do not landscape so as to obscure a clear unobstructed view of driveways and sidewalks. This gives would be thieves nowhere to hide.

Doors

Hinge Doors

The hinge door is the most common type used in houses and apartments. They are used for front entry, porch, garage and basement doors leading into the home. **ALL** exterior hinge doors should be of solid-core construction, 1 ¾ inch thick. The door frame should be of solid construction and have a proper strike plate. Hollow core or composition board doors can be easily broken through.

Outside Hinges

Doors with hinges on the outside will give a burglar easy access. The burglar only has to remove the hinge pins and lift the door from the frame. This can be corrected in the following ways:

- Remove the door and remount with hinges inside so the door swings in.
- Install hinges with non-removable pins.
- Install a locking pin below the existing hinge plate.
 1. Drill holes below the hinge plate in both the door and jamb.
 2. Insert a headless screw, bolt or nail into the door jamb below the hinge plate. Leave at least ½ inch of screw/nail extended from jamb.

Once done, as the door closes the screw/nail will penetrate into the door and hold it in place if hinge pins are removed.

Deadbolt Locks

The best defense for a good solid core door is a deadbolt lock with a 1” throw bolt. This lock can be used on any hinge door where a strike plate can be properly fastened to the door frame. When installing the strike plate it should be secured with at least 3 (three) inch wood screws. The screws should penetrate into the house framing. If not then longer screws should be used.

Deadbolt locks come in double key cylinder and inside thumb operated styles. If there are no windows near the door a thumb operated style can be used. Both single and double key deadbolt locks should meet the following criteria to be a good security device:

- The bolt must extend at least 1” and contain a hardened steel insert.
- The deadbolt should contain a cylinder guard to prohibit the twisting of the lock with a wrench or pliers. It must be solid metal, not hollow cast or stamped metal.
- The keyway should be a five-tumbler system to make it more difficult to pick.
- The connecting screws holding the lock together must be on the inside band made of case hardened steel. No screw heads should be exposed to the outside.
- The connecting screws must be at least ¼ inch in diameter and go into solid metal stock, not screw posts.

NOTE: Many communities prohibit the use of a double key cylinder deadbolt lock because it can be dangerous if the door is to be used as an escape route in an emergency such as a fire. Consult your local law enforcement, fire department or locksmith regarding their use. If used, a key should be left in the lock whenever the house is occupied.

Key-In-the-Knob Locks

These locks on an outside door are an invitation to even inexperienced burglars. These locks can be forced open by breaking off the knob and frequently can be pried open or

opened by slipping something (like a credit card) between the jamb and bolt. Do not rely on these locks alone. Install a deadbolt to supplement them.

Locks for Double Doors

Many homes with double doors use half-barrel slide bolts on the inactive (stationary) door. These are weak and should not be relied on. Additional locking devices should be added. Flush bolts installed at the top and bottom of the inactive door should be installed. These add additional security and the would-be burglar can't access them from outside. These bolts need at least a one inch throw and need to penetrate well into the top framing and bottom threshold. The strike plate should be installed with at least 3 inch wood screws.

Locks for Dutch Doors

Dutch doors can be secured with a deadbolt between the upper and lower door panels.

Security for Doors with Glass

If an exterior door has a glass window or if there is glass within 40 inches of the lock, you may want to install security screening, window guards or burglar rated glazing. Use non-removable screws to mount screens, bars or window guards.

Sliding Glass Doors

Sliding glass doors present a major security problem. Without proper locks installed, and special steps taken, the doors can be removed from outside.

A sliding glass door is lifted into place when installed. It therefore must be lifted from the track to be removed. To prevent removal install #8 or #10 sheet metal screws into the top of the door frame on each end and in the middle. Adjust the screws until the door just clears them when door is in use. If done properly this will take up the slack and keep the door from being lifted from the track.

Note: Dowels alone placed in the door track will not prevent a burglar from removing the door sections.

The best lock for sliding glass doors is operated by a key from the inside. The lock bolt should engage the strike sufficiently so it will not be disengaged by any amount of movement. When the existing inside pull needs to be changed in order to accommodate a new deadbolt lock it is recommended an inside cylinder pull be used as a replacement. A single lock is not recommended due to the softness of aluminum frames.

A supplemental lock should be installed at the top or bottom made from steel and inserted in the sliding door at a downward angle to secure the two doors together.

Garage Doors

Garage doors should always be closed and locked whenever you are away from home. Most garages offer a burglar a great selection of tools to assist them in breaking into

your home. They also contain ladders to get to second story windows and doors. They also offer a hidden avenue for access to your home through a connecting door. They offer a place to work unnoticed and can muffle sounds made during entry. A securely locked garage also prevents the theft of vehicles, lawn mowers, tools and other property.

Sectional Roll-Up Doors

For overhead sectional roll-up doors drill a hole of proper size in the track directly above one of the guide rollers when the door is closed. Then install a padlock. Many doors have pre-drilled track with a provision for this security measure. Another option is to install eyebolts on the inside top of the door and in the top frame. When closed, a padlock can be installed.

Electric Garage Door Openers

An electric garage door opener should have steel gears and a chain drive. Periodically check the adjustment to prevent the bottom of the door from being lifted. This stops someone from crawling under the door.

When you move into a new home reset the opener code and remote control units. Cane bolts can be installed on the inside of the door. They can only be locked or unlocked from inside. Sliding hasps can also be used.

Lifting Doors

Hardened steel hasps and padlocks are recommended to secure both sides of a lifting garage door. This is to prevent the opposite side from being lifted allowing someone to crawl under the door.

Installing the Hasp

The hasp must be of hardened steel and installed with carriage bolts through the door. Use large washers on the inside. Once installed the protruding threads should be peened over to prevent removal of the nuts securing the bolts. When in use the mounting screws on the stationary portion must have the heads covered. The screws should be of sufficient length to properly secure it to the door framing.

Selecting a Padlock

Use a good quality padlock to secure your garage door. There are many styles to choose from and some may even be keyed to your house key. Do not be tempted to buy cheap padlocks since they most likely will not provide the security you need. Most combination padlocks are poor because of the weak bodies which may be defeated with hammer blows. Most padlocks are assaulted by bolt cutters and pry bars. Some padlocks have a built in shackle guard which makes them more difficult to get at with a bolt cutter. The following should be the “**Minimum**” standard for an exterior padlock which can be taken to a hardware store or locksmith:

- Case hardened steel, 7/16” shackle. (Short and heavy 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 the key from being removed until the padlock is locked.

Some padlocks have a key code number printed on them. **This should be filed off.** If not, a burglar could take the number to a locksmith with the brand and obtain a new key. Never leave a padlock unlocked. They could remove the lock, have a key made and return it. Later when nobody is home the burglar can return and open the lock allowing easy entry.

Other Garage Doors

The weakest link in an attached garage is usually the side (rear) door. Doors with windows, thin veneer wood or no deadbolts would be considered a primary target for burglars. Make these doors as secure as your front entry door. Many times it is easier to replace the door or attach plywood to the inside to strengthen the existing door. Windows can be replaced with burglary resistant glazing.

Windows

Sliding Windows

Sliding windows should be secured using the same methods as a sliding glass door. Both the pan head top screws and bracing devices are effective if the slider window is on the inside. Auxiliary locks are also available for improved security.

Casement Windows (Crank type)

Casement windows are the easiest to secure. Make sure the latch works properly and the window crank does not have excessive play. Replace any worn hardware. Key locks are available if you desire. Windows that are not normally opened/closed can have the handles removed in case the glass is broken.

Double-Hung Sash Type Windows

To secure these windows, drill a hole angled slightly downward through the top of the bottom sash into the bottom of the upper sash. Place an eyebolt or an 8 penny nail in the hole to prevent the window from being opened.

Auxiliary latches are also available. The most effective lock for a double-hung window is a key-locking security sash lock. If possible, mount the lock with 2” wood screws.

Louvered Windows

It is best to replace louvered windows with another style. The panes can sometimes be pried from the framing or they can be snapped off. Metal grating or bars may be used as long as it is secured with large bolts preventing the grating or bars from being torn from

their mount. If using bars, space them close enough to prevent someone from slipping between them.

In addition, remove each pane and sand the frame and glass where they meet and apply a 2 part epoxy resin to the sanded areas and re-install the panes. This alone will not make a louvered window very secure.

Basement Windows

Basement windows are one of the most common entry points for burglars. Special attention should be paid to windows hidden by landscaping as they provide a place for a burglar to work unnoticed. Windows should be replaced with plexiglass or polycarbonate. Decorative security bars can also be installed.

Garage Windows

If you use garage windows for ventilation, install the same security measures as those used in your house. Hang curtains or miniblinds to prevent someone from looking inside to see if you are home or casing for valuables.

Window Guards or Grilles

For extremely vulnerable windows you may want to consider installing heavy metal (steel/iron) grilles. Before installing consult your local fire department about emergency release requirements. Grilles should be attached with one way screws or secured on the inside. Bars and grating are not recommended for sleeping rooms because they could create an emergency exit hazard. If they are installed they must have an inside mechanism allowing them to be opened.

Alarms

Alarm systems can contribute to your home's security. However **do not** depend solely on an alarm system to protect you. Use proper locking devices and start or join a neighborhood watch program.

There are many types of alarm systems on the market. Check first with your local law enforcement to determine if there is an alarm ordinance in your area.

Entire alarm systems may be purchased or leased from professional state licensed alarm companies. They are also available from electrical and hardware stores along with home improvement centers. Alarm systems installed by professional well established companies may save you money in service calls and local fines for false alarms. If wishing to use a service, consult with the Better Business Bureau to help you decide on a local reputable alarm company. You may also contact the state licensing agency to verify the company is licensed and whether there have been any complaints or actions taken against the company.

Get at least three estimates before deciding on an alarm company or what system best suits your needs. 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 capability.
- Horn sounding device. (external siren recommended)

Most residential alarms have an audible feature from a bell, siren or tone generator. An audible alarm on doors and windows can be an effective deterrent to an amateur burglar. Make sure your family knows and understands how your alarm system operates and sounds. Notify your neighbors you have installed an alarm system and make sure they are aware of the alarm's sound. Also make sure the alarm is loud enough to be heard inside their homes. Family and neighbors should be advised to call "911" when they hear the alarm.

If you live in a rural area or if your neighbors are gone during the day, you may wish to have the alarm connected to a central reporting station. When your alarm goes off a responder calls your home to verify if it is a false alarm or not by requesting anyone answering the phone provide a security code you choose. If no answer or no proper code is provided, they in turn contact your law enforcement agency.

Safe Practices

Don't Tip Off Burglars by Telephone

Burglars will attempt to find out if someone is home by calling. If you get several suspicious "wrong number" calls or "nobody at the other end" calls, be very cautious. Warn family members, especially children, not to give out information via telephone regarding who is home, who is out or how long they are expected to be gone.

If using an answering machine or voicemail services, do not indicate on your greeting you are not home or how long you plan to be away. A better message would be that you screen calls and sometimes you may or may not be home.

If your name is in the phonebook, do not place your full name on the mailbox, door or apartment building roster. Use your last name or your first two initials and last name. Displaying your full name only makes it easier for a burglar to locate your phone number in the phonebook.

Make It Look As If You Are Home

Maintaining an appearance of occupancy even when you are not home is essential to deterring a burglar.

Timers can automatically turn on/off lighting, televisions, radios, etc. creating a deception of occupancy when you are not there. Timers should be used when on vacation, out for the evening or even during the day if you are at work.

One type of timer is a 24 hour dial that allows you to set on/off times to coincide with normal usage in your home. These timers simply plug into an outlet and the device

plugs into the timer. For the most realistic deception several timers should be used to simulate occupancy. A television and lamp could be on from dusk until 10pm. Then another timer could be set to turn on a bedroom lamp for a set amount of time to indicate someone is going to bed.

During the day leave drapes and shades in their normal position just as they would be when you are home. Do not leave easily stolen valuables in sight close to windows.

Don't Advertise Your Vacation Plans

Inform one or two people of your vacation plans. A trusted neighbor can keep an eye on things while you are gone. Have the neighbor pick up the paper and other deliveries. **Do not** inform any delivery people you will be on vacation. If you will be gone for an extended time, arrange to have your lawn taken care of and your garbage can set out and brought back in. Check with local law enforcement to see if they offer vacation home checks.

Don't Reward the Burglar Who Does Get In

If, despite all your precautions, a burglar does get in, do not give him/her a bonus of cash or easily carried jewelry. Never keep large sums of cash in your home. Keep valuable jewelry you don't often wear in a safe deposit box.

House Numbers

Make sure law enforcement, fire and EMS can find your house. Make sure your house numbers are clearly visible on a high contrast background. Each number should be at least 4" high. Illuminate the numbers at night. If you wish you can paint the numbers on the driveway near the street if your driveway is paved.

Emergency Telephone Numbers

Law enforcement, fire and EMS numbers should be listed on or programmed into each phone in your home. Stickers are available for this.

If you discover a burglary has been committed, leave the house undisturbed and call **911**. If you interrupt a burglar in your home, **Do not enter. Call 911 immediately from a safe location.**

Protecting Your Property

Mark and Record Your Property – Operation Identification

Many communities have shown that you and your community can reduce the risk of burglary by simply marking your possessions. Some areas have had up to a 25% decline in burglaries after instituting such programs. It is known as Operation Identification.

An inexpensive electric engraver or etching pencil, sometimes available on loan at police departments, is used to engrave your property with specific identifiers. Engrave your valuables with this information: WI _____ (insert your driver's license number here). The WI stands for Wisconsin and that with your personal driver's license number, will

identify the item as your property should it become stolen. You can inscribe furniture, appliances, televisions, stereo equipment, cameras, lawn equipment, tools, musical instruments, computers, etc. The inscription can be placed in an inconspicuous area without marring the appearance of the item. Caution should be used on certain items such as firearms as the engraver will cause permanent damage to the metal. If placed on the stock of a shotgun/rifle, the stock could be replaced or refinished making the engraving useless.

Some smaller items, such as jewelry, cannot be effectively engraved. These items should be laid out and photographed. Larger items you choose not to engrave should be videotaped. You should also have your driver's license included next to the items to assist in proof of ownership. Any extremely valuable jewelry or other items not engraved should be appraised. Place a description, photograph and listing of the items with the appraisal. You may even wish to video record each room in your home.

Once you mark your property an inventory list should be created and saved in a safety deposit box, fireproof safe, etc. Make sure the list is somewhere inaccessible to a burglar.

Also, save the receipts along with model and serial number of any items and keep this with the inventory list. If you have a burglary, fire or storm damage, the list will help you remember what you had and assist with any insurance claim. In addition, most times after a theft or burglary, people have not kept the model and serial number information for their belongings. This makes it almost impossible to locate the stolen items since there is no way to prove ownership without this information or owner applied markings. Update the inventory list annually. Make sure newly purchased items are added to the inventory list.

It has been shown burglars tend to avoid both homes and communities where Operation Identification is used. After identifying your property let would-be burglars and thieves know your property is marked. You can obtain decals warning you are a participant in Operation Identification.

Insure Against Theft

Homeowners and renters insurance provide basic economic protection against a burglary or other forms of theft. Policies are available for mobile home owners and condominium owners as well. If you do not have insurance it is recommended you obtain it without delay. (Some insurance companies will discount premiums with certain security measures taken by the policy holder.)

A typical homeowner's policy insures you against loss by burglary for up to 50 percent. For example, if your home is insured for \$100,000, you would have \$50,000 coverage for the contents of your home. Renters insurance is the value stated in the policy. Some items you own may not be covered under the basic policy and will require a "Rider/Endorsement" or separate note to cover their replacement if stolen. There also may be a deductible for your policy.

Insurance companies differ in provided coverage. Some policies have “full replacement” value for stolen property while others will pay for the loss based on replacement costs less depreciation.

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

Protecting Your Neighborhood

Start or Join Neighborhood Watch

This is a crime prevention program that uses people in cooperation with law enforcement to reduce crime in their neighborhoods. Neighborhood Watch 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.

By cooperating with each other and law enforcement people help fight crime in their neighborhoods the most effective way, before it begins. Neighborhood watch can reduce residential burglaries and other crime. By participating you will learn:

- What are effective crime prevention techniques for houses, apartments and your neighborhood.
- How you can become a good neighbor by becoming a partner with your local law enforcement.