



HOME & VEHICLE SAFETY TIPS



Protecting Your Home From the Inside

- **Get a home security system and ensure you use it.** The very presence of a security system will deter burglars, but even the most sophisticated alarm system cannot protect your home if you don't use it. Arm your system every time you leave your home, and prominently display your security system signage.
- **Get the right door(s) and reinforce doorjamb.** Make sure each exterior door (including the door to your garage) is solid core or metal so it can't be easily kicked in. If you have weak doorjamb, reinforce the area with a strike plate.
- **Make sure your front door has a peep hole.** Always know who you are letting in before you open the door.
- **Protect sliding doors.** Use a wooden dowel or metal bar for sliding doors and windows so they can't be easily pried open.
- **Secure your home's windows.** Double glazed or toughened glass will be harder for thieves to break. Make sure all of your windows have sturdy locks.
- **Remove flyers from your doorstep.** A buildup of pizza and Chinese takeout menus on the front step will tip burglars off that you have been away from home for a while.
- **Don't announce that you are away on social media.** While that picture from Tahiti would make the perfect cover shot, wait until you get home to post it. Burglars check social media pages to target vacant homes.
- **If leaving on vacation, load the car in the garage.** You don't want advertise you'll be away from home for an extended period of time, so if you're able, load your luggage into the car while it's in a closed garage.
- **Be light savvy.** While away from home, put your home's lights on a timer to simulate someone being home without leaving the lights on and wasting energy.
- **Make it seem like you do not live alone.** If you notice someone outside of your home, act like you are talking to someone inside or saying good-bye.
- **Do not put boxes for expensive appliances or electronics on the curb.** Not only might a thief want to steal your stuff, they might get the idea that you have a lot of other things to steal inside.
- **Do not store jewelry or cash in your bedroom.** Build a secret hiding place for expensive valuables and keep them in a safe, preferably bolted to the floor.
- **Get a dog.** It doesn't have to be a big intimidating dog to deter burglars. Small, yappy dogs are just as effective at scaring criminals. Even if you don't have a dog, consider posting a "beware of dog" sign.
- **Close your garage door.** Never leave your garage door open if you aren't in it or outside and able to keep an eye on it. Why leave a major entrance open and let thieves see all the great stuff to steal?
- **Don't hide keys.** Whether the key is under the mat, in a fake rock, or above the door frame, crooks know these spots. Protecting your house from burglars is as easy as not giving them a key in the first place.
- **Follow up after someone's done work inside your home.** After a repair worker or unknown visitor has left your home, be sure to double-check windows and doors to ensure they are closed and locked. It's possible he/she may have unlocked window(s)/door(s) to gain entry later.

- **Be neighborly.** Get to know your neighbors. Once you get to know them, you can watch each other's homes, move cars, and take papers and advertisements off front porches when on vacation.

Protecting Your Home From the Outside

- **Walk around the exterior of your home and scout out its weaknesses.** The best way to protect your home from the outside is to survey it with the eyes of a burglar. Look for vulnerable spots and take note of any expensive electronics, art, or furniture that is easily spotted through windows. You don't need to redecorate your entire home, but it doesn't hurt to make small adjustments where you can.
- **Be landscape smart.** It might be more private to have greenery in front of windows to block the view of the street, but this gives thieves a place to hide and break into your home without being seen.
- **A stuffed mailbox is a red flag.** Have the post office hold your mail when you go out of town to avoid alerting criminals that you are away.
- **Stow expensive items like grills and bikes in the garage.** It may be a hassle to roll items out every time you use them, but leaving them out makes it easy for thieves to steal, without even entering your home.
- **Don't make it easy to get to second floor windows.** If you have a ladder, do not leave it in your yard. Thieves are looking for an easy opportunity to gain entry into your home.
- **Keep fences, gates, and garage doors locked.** Invest in a quality padlock for each outside entrance, even if you only lock it at night. Most friends and family won't mind letting you know ahead of time that they'll be visiting, so it's best to leave them locked at all times.
- **Start a Neighborhood Watch.** Consider forming a neighborhood watch program. This will give you the opportunity to get to know your neighbors better and create an invaluable awareness and commitment to crime prevention in your area.

Bernalillo Neighborhood Watch Program: www.bernco.gov/planning/neighborhood-watch-program.aspx

Protecting Your Vehicle

- **Lock the doors and close the windows.** Don't make it easy for a thief to break in or reach in and snatch anything of value. Make it a habit to double check that your doors are locked and your windows are closed when parking your vehicle.
- **Don't leave your car running.** It can be tempting to leave your car running when you're just popping in and out of the house or store, but this also makes it pretty easy for a thief to hop in and drive away.
- **Park in well-lit areas.** If you're parking your car after the sun has gone down, try to find a spot underneath a streetlight that's well-lit and well-trafficked. Thieves may be less likely to rummage through a car with a spotlight on them and a potential audience just around the corner.
- **Hide any valuables.** Better yet, avoid keeping valuables in your car at all. If a thief must choose between a seemingly empty car or one with a laptop, cell phone, or wallet on the passenger seat, guess which one they'll choose? If you must leave something important in your car, put it in your trunk before you reach your destination. Experienced thieves have been known to stake out parking lots, look for drivers transferring things to their car trunk, and then break into the trunk.
- **Invest in an anti-theft system.** Whether it's a steering wheel lock, a window alarm, or an ignition cut-off system, anything that makes a thief work harder could also make your car safer. If it slows them down or could potentially get them caught, they'll probably pass.



WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SAFER

