



**TIP SHEET**

# Home Security Challenge

## Is your home likely to attract a potential burglar?

Is the security in your home sufficient to frustrate a potential thief or increase their chances of being caught? The Home Security Challenge was developed to give you an indication of the level of security in your home. Take the Home Security Challenge and learn how a little time, effort and money can greatly improve your peace of mind.



**OUTSIDE HOME**

- Are there clear views of all windows and doors?

Yes  No

The more private an area is, the more likely it is to attract the attention of a criminal. Trim trees and shrubs that block sight lines to your windows and doors.

- During the evening is there visible interior or exterior lighting that gives the impression that you are home, even if you're not?

Yes  No

Install outside lighting to eliminate dark areas around doors or windows. Use motion lights with a low intensity feature as an alternative to bright constant level lighting.

**DOORS**

- Do all of your exterior doors have a deadbolt with at least a one-inch throw?

Yes  No

Criminals with tools easily defeat conventional key in the knob locks. Deadbolts should be installed on all exterior doors.

- Are the screws that secure your entry doors and strike plates of your home at least 2 1/2 inches long?

Yes  No

Most door installations use screws less than 1" in length. This results in a door that appears secure but is relatively weak and easily prone to being kicked in. Door kick break-ins to homes are becoming common. To secure a door properly the screws should be at least 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 inches long.

- Have you taken steps to reinforce any windows located in or next to doors?

Yes  No

Glass within 40 inches of a door lock can be broken and a criminal can reach inside to unlock the door.

The security of windows at the sides of doors can be improved by adding a polycarbonate panel. Call Crime Prevention Services for details.

- Is there a convenient way of clearly seeing who is at your door without opening it?

Yes  No

Every entrance door should have a convenient way of clearly seeing who is there without opening it. For most doors this will require the installation of a wide-angle lens peephole or door scope. This will allow you to keep your door locked while assessing the visitor prior to opening the door. Chain locks should not be used as a security device as they can easily be broken. If you have a screen door, by leaving it locked you could open the main door so that you could still converse with any person at your door while still maintaining some security. A locked screen door also provides additional security to any door.



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#### SLIDING DOORS

- If you have a sliding door, do you have screws in the top of the track to prevent the door from being lifted out when they are in the closed and locked position?

Yes  No

- There is a 1" gap at the top of sliding doors, which allows them to be lifted in and out of their tracks. The addition of 3 flat-headed wood screws in the upper track of the doors in the closed position will prevent criminals from lifting them out.
- If you have a sliding door, do you have either a hockey stick in the bottom track or a security bar to prevent the door from opening?

Yes  No

#### WINDOWS

- Do the windows on your home have a pin or secondary after market locking device in case the normal window lock is pried and defeated?

Yes  No

Most window locks are easily broken. Criminals target sliding windows and double hung windows are easy to jimmy open.

To prevent quiet entry, drill a downward sloping hole through the top of the bottom sash and into (but not through) the bottom of the top sash. Insert a pin or nail in this hole to prevent the opening of either sash. Casement windows usually have secure latches. Make sure your latches are strong and tight fitting.

#### BASEMENT WINDOWS

- Are your basement windows pinned or do you have a wooden dowel in the track of the window?

Yes  No

Basement windows are the preferred entry point for break and enters to homes. Extra security should be used on them. The most effective and aesthetically pleasing way to secure basement windows is to replace them with a polycarbonate window. There is a method to do this, which is both effective and inexpensive, please contact Crime Prevention Services for details. Security bars are also available specifically for basement windows. It is important that you make sure that any security bars you install in your home have an escape feature in the event of a fire.

#### GARAGE DOORS

- Do you always close and lock your garage door?

Yes  No

Thefts from garages are one of the most common yet easily prevented crimes. Keep garage doors closed and locked. Keep ladders in the garage.

#### VALUABLES

- Do you limit your exposure to risk by storing valuables in the basement or keep them in a safety deposit box?

Yes  No

Criminals know all the hiding spots on the first and second floor. The best place to put valuables is in a safety deposit box. Otherwise a good alternative is to hide valuables in a lock box in a general storage area of the basement. Criminals tend to spend a minimal amount of time there.

- Have you marked all valuables with an engraver and posted Operation Identification stickers on your windows and doors to deter theft and assist in the recovery of goods in the event they are lost or stolen?

Yes  No



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#### VALUABLES CONT'D

Marked property is an effective deterrent against break and enters. See the "Mark Your Property-For Home Owners-Operation Identification" fact sheet for details on this program.

#### WHEN AWAY

- When you are away from home do you leave lights on timers both inside and outside the home?

Yes  No

Timers make a home look lived in and will potentially avoid leaving your home in darkness or leaving the outside lights on during the day.

- Do you have a trusted neighbour or friend pick up your mail, newspapers and flyers when away for more than a day?

Yes  No

The accumulation of mail, newspapers and flyers is a sure sign that nobody's home. Avoid sending the wrong message to burglars.

- Have you made arrangements to have your lawn cut and your snow shoveled when you go away?

Yes  No

- If you have an answering machine, do you leave a message that leaves the impression you are home?

Yes  No

Never leave a message that says you're not home.

#### RESULTS

To see how you did on the Home Security Challenge please add up the number of questions that you answered "YES".

**(17) You have taken the necessary home security measures to deter and prevent a potential break and enter.**

**(12-16) Security conscious home that needs a few improvements.**

**(0-11) Very little security in place. You need to improve your security.**

Your results reflect the level of security your home has in relation to the most common security weaknesses.

Please review your security as all of the above changes to your home can, in most cases, be done for less than \$100. The results are substantial for the amount of money invested in your home.

Please make sure you get a copy of the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Fact Sheet. Additionally there are more detailed Fact Sheets on specific home security concerns. If you have any questions please call the Rural & Agricultural Crime Teams.