

SIMPLE HOME SAFETY

Did you know that 40 percent of home intrusions occur because a door or window was left unlocked? So... it is wise to lock your doors and windows even if, or maybe more so, when you are home. If you open your sliding glass door for air be sure you latch it in the slightly open position. Most sliding doors have this feature. Also use this latch when the door is closed to prevent someone from lifting it off the track. Sometimes you open a few windows for fresh air and when you, or your spouse close them, you forget to lock them. Sometimes I forget we even have windows! So check to make sure they are all locked.

Check to be sure all your locksets and dead bolts are in working order and if you just moved into the home have all the locks or at least the tumblers and keys changed right away. You never know who the last owner may have given a key to.

In our community we usually know when someone is coming to our door so be wary if someone wants to gain entrance posing as a utility or maintenance person and hasn't called first or been announced by the gatehouse. Ask for identification and/or call the company to verify the claim. And even if they are legit, never leave such representatives in your home without you being there. Why tempt them?

Here's another handy idea. Put your car keys near your bed at night. If you hear a noise outside your home or someone trying to get in your house, just press the panic button for your car. Usually the key fob has a button with a little horn symbol on it. This should scare away anyone up to no good. Use it also if you forget where you parked your car in the mall parking lot. The alarm will be set off and the horn will continue to sound until you turn it off. If you are going to be away for a while, ask a neighbor to park in your

driveway. Stop or ask someone to bring in your mail and newspapers. Put a radio or TV on a timer. Permanently mark your valuables with your driver's license or name but not your Social Security number. Also, keep pictures and records of all marked objects in a safe place. Keep gift-wrapped packages hidden from outside view. Keep important papers, valuable jewelry and large amounts of cash in a safety deposit box. When you purchase new electronic equipment, do not advertise it. Break down cartons and fold with the plain side out before putting out for pick-up. If you have an alarm system display the signs and stickers near doors and back of house windows. If you do not have an alarm put up some signs and stickers anyway. Who's to know what's for real and what's not?

Another nice item in my opinion is a medium size fire safe. They are movable but bulky and an attention getter. Keeps your papers safe from fire and if someone tries to steal it they will stand out like a sore thumb carrying a two foot square safe down the street.

But the best in my opinion is lighting. Lights on timers in and out give a lived in look. Also, a TV on a timer will reflect shadows around the room when it is on making it look as though someone is home. Motion sensor lights in and out are great, especially near entrances. The sensors and bulbs should be high enough that someone cannot easily put tape over the sensor lens or unscrew the bulbs rendering them useless. How about this... a motion sensor in a table lamp, but instead of a bulb put in a screw-in adaptor so you can plug in a radio. Hide the radio under a chair or sofa and have its volume turned up full. If someone comes into that room the radio will go on and scare the bejabbers out of them. You may have to clean some bejabbers from your carpeting, but it would be worth it. You need a good heart for this because you know you will forget all about it and when you get home you are the one who will be surprised.

Do not open your garage door until the door is in full view. Keep the door between your garage and home locked, especially if you keep a garage window open to help cool it.

Walt Trevaskis had a large (two inch throw), keyed deadbolt installed in that door so that it's harder to break in and impossible to break in w/o him hearing the breakage (The locksmith charged him \$48 plus service call, but he had all tumbler/cylinders changed at the that time and added a rear door deadbolt at the same time; total \$160).

Most of these devices mentioned above are available at Home Depot, Lowes or on the web at http://www.smarthome.com/project_security.html