

# Security Clearance: How to Protect Your Home Against Burglary

What are the odds that your home will be broken into this year? **Unfortunately, according to burglary statistics within the United States, one in every thirty-six homes will be burglarized in this year alone, resulting in an average loss of \$1,675 per break-in.** That is one every 15 minutes in these United States. And this statistic doesn't account for the psychological cost the victims suffer.

Protecting your castle doesn't require a moat to surround it, or ugly bars on doors and windows. Many options are available to enhance the security of your home. However, as important as security is, never compromise exits or entrances you'll be depending on during an emergency.

Home Security systems that alert when an intruder enters are great tools, but they only come into play **after** a burglar has breached your home. And these systems may not register something as simple as a broken window.

**Lighting, window glass and hardware choices**, as well as the **materials** your doors and windows are made of, all contribute to your security, and peace of mind.

Remember too, knowing your neighbors, and which ones are home during the day, can be a distinct advantage\*. Think of it as your personal "social security."

Let's examine some of the options you may, or may not, know you have to safeguard your home.

\*<http://www.nextdoor.com>



## Lighting

Check your points of entry all along the front, back and sides of your home. Check for hidden areas such as behind fences, gates or foliage. Installing motion sensors is an excellent way to deter unwanted visitors (both two legged and four legged). And don't forget to check simple lighting over your doors and windows for vulnerable areas, where simply unscrewing a lightbulb can open your home to intrusion. Perhaps upgrading your area lighting is a good first point of defense.

### Checklist

- Which doors and windows are hidden from neighbors, or the street, by foliage or other obstructions?
- How many possible points of entry have adequate lighting available?
- Does your front or back door have a light that can be easily unscrewed?



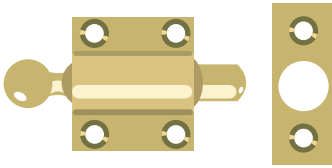
## Window Glass

Short of leaving a door or window open, easy access through a glass window by breaking it makes glass one of the most common means of unwanted entry.

The best glass solution for points of entry is laminated glass. Laminated glass holds together even when shattered because it is held in place by an interlayer between two sheets of glass. This interlayer keeps the layers bonded even when broken. Think of it as a "spider web" effect that keeps the glass together so no large pieces separate.

### Checklist

- Note which windows allow for a clear view into your home where burglars can see your valuables at a glance. Target these windows first for a laminate glass upgrade.
- Check windows on first floor or basements for cracks, wooden frames that have begun to breakdown, crack or have water damage. Some structural framing issues may need a professional look.
- Test to see if the window glass moves when pressed or knocked on. This may indicate that the glass installed has integrity issues within its framing.



# Hardware

## Door Hardware

Advice from the National Crime Prevention Council simply states :

**“All exterior doors should be either metal or solid wood. For added security, use strong door hinges on the inside of the door, with non-removable or hidden pins. “**

Having strong reliable locks is essential to keeping your home secure. They are your first line of defense. USE THEM, even when running to the store for a quick errand or taking the dog around the corner for a short walk. Install locks for your door that have multiple points of engagement with the door frame.

Exterior doors become prey to a burglar kicking open the door from outside. In fact 34% of illegal entry is from kicking open a door. Make sure, at a minimum, to use deadbolts and high quality door knobs. When choosing a deadbolt, look for one that extends at least 1" when in the locked position. This will inhibit ramming, kicking and persons using screw drivers or crow bars inserted into the door jam. Also, use a reinforced strike plate with extra long mounting screws (ex. 1 ½" screw) to anchor the lock effectively.



Multi-Point Lockset

## Window Hardware

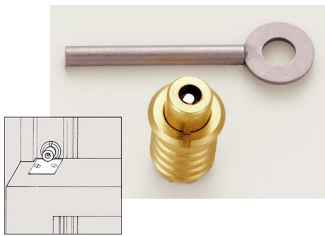
With technological advance, comes improvements in window hardware and security. As with the benefits of laminated glass, if the locks are not secure, you will have possible intruder issues somewhere down the line. Many new hardware systems for wooden windows include lock and pin systems that are virtually “tamper proof.”



Deadbolt Reinforcement Plate

## Checklist

- Check your exterior door striker plate by unscrewing it to see how far the screw extends into the wooden jam. Remember, screws should extend at least 1 ½" into the door frame for best security.
- If you have sliding glass doors, use keyed locking devices that secure the door to the frame. Another easy addition to the sliding glass door is a bar or long wooden dowel in the track to prevent the door from opening.
- Remember to try to push or knock on the glass in your door(s) to assure the glass is secure in the door frame. If it moves or rattles, have a professional inspect them for its integrity.
- Check wooden window frames for any cracking or peeling paint. Use a screw driver or knife to push into the wood. It should remain solid. If not, the integrity of the frame should be examined by a professional.
- Windows should rise and lower easily when in the unlocked position. Do NOT trust the simple thumb lock that comes with a standard sash window. These are easily pried off.



Double-Hung Window Vent Lock

## Materials

Now that we have some sense of the add-on locks, glass and lighting to protect your home, let's look at the actual integrity of the wooden doors and frames.

The most secure and resilient material for a door is solid core hardwood. How do you tell if you have a particle door, hollow core or solid core door once it is painted? Grab your step stool, open your door and look at the top of the door. Framing surrounding your front door should be solid all the way around. Often, reinforcing the door jamb is a simple way to improve the strength of the entry to your home.

## Checklist

- Check the top of your exterior doors to see if they are solid core wood.
- Check your striker plate where the door closes to make sure it does not rattle but creates a secure closure.
- Check the screw in the strike plate to allow for 1 ½" screw into 1 ½" wood for minimum recommended allowance. *(Many striker plates come with factory screws shorter than recommended)*
- Look carefully at the door frames for any wood that may be structurally compromised. Push on the wood with a screw driver, or knife, to ensure that the wood fibers are strong, not mushy or stringy. If paint is peeling or cracking, be sure to maintain the wood to prevent rot.
- Add extra strength to the inside door jamb to reinforce the wall that contains the door.

Let us know if we can help.

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