



Home Security Checklist

Perfection in anything is unattainable. Truthfully, security systems are no different; but you can always come close. Armed with a little knowledge you can design a personalized security system that will give you peace of mind without costing a fortune.

Security systems need to do one of the following:

1. **Make the thief think he will be caught if he attempts enter.**
2. **Increase the time it takes to enter.**
3. **Or, catch the thief.**

The perfect security system has the ability to do all three through the use of visual and physical deterrents combined with an alerting component.

Visual deterrents make the criminal think that your house is difficult to enter and thus the risk of capture too high for him to attempt an invasion. They are things that can be seen from the street or as a burglar approaches your home. The visual deterrents you use will depend on your needs and preferences, but because they are so affordable and easy to implement, many people choose to incorporate several forms into their security system.

If visual deterrents fail to protect your home, physical deterrents take over. Time is the enemy for burglars: they need to get in and out of your house quickly.



Physical deterrents make entering your home physically difficult; increasing the time it takes to commit a burglary to such an extent that the burglar will eventually give up – or be caught. The type of physical deterrents you will need can be determined by taking a good look around your property.

Designing a security system that incorporates all three of these elements will ensure that you will have peace of mind whether you are at home or on vacation.

Windows

Windows are generally a weak link in residential security. They can be pried open or broken, lifted from their tracks and the panes removed. There are numerous ways to increase the security of windows. Conduct a simple survey of your windows and ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the weak points?
- What is the access from the ground, porch, roof, trees, fire escape, ledge?
- Is the glass shatter resistant?
- What is the state of repair of the sash and frame?
- Are the locking mechanisms functioning and are they engaged?
- Is the surrounding area well lit?

Some tips for adding security to window:

- Are all basement and ground floor windows fitted with security bars, security pins or security latches?
- Are basement and ground floor windows shatter resistant?
- Do you have window coverings on all windows to prevent outsiders from seeing in?
- If you have a window air conditioner, is it bolted to the wall to prevent it from being easily removed from the outside?

Locksmiths can provide additional information on door, garage, lock and window security.

Exterior

- Do you have exterior lighting at every entry point?
- Do motion sensors control your exterior lighting?
- Do you ensure shrubbery or other structures do not provide a place where an intruder can hide?
- Are shrubs and bushes trimmed to a maximum height of no more than 42"?
- Are trees trimmed so that the low branches are at least 7' off the ground?
- Does your residence give the appearance that someone is at home at all times?
- Are your storage sheds and buildings locked?
- Are all second floor windows or doors locked and/or secured?
- Have you locked up your ladder that could be used by a burglar to gain entrance to the second floor?
- Are all other openings to such as skylights, crawl spaces and vents protected?
- Is your house number illuminated and easily visible from the street and back alley during all hours?
- Do you remove your keys from your unlocked vehicle?
- Do you have good lighting in your driveway and on the paths leading to your entry doors?
- Are all gate hasps 40" below the top of the gate and secured by through-bolts with rounded edges and locked with high security padlocks?
- Do you have a privacy fence?

Interior

- Do you check your doors and windows each time you leave home to ensure they are closed and locked?
- Do you keep your doors and windows locked when you are at home?
- When away from the home do you leave your window shades or blinds closed?
- When away from home do you leave a radio on tuned to a talk only station?
- When your home is not occupied in the evening hours after dark, do you have lights that are controlled by timers?
- When you answer the door do you find out who is on the other side before you unlock or open it?

Doors and Locks

Locks are the “first line of defense” against intruders. No lock can make a house burglar proof, but can make a difference between the burglar considering your home easy or difficult to enter.

- Do you keep your doors locked at all times?
- Have you re-keyed your locks since you moved in or if your keys have been lost?
- Do your doors have a wide-angle through door viewer?
- Are all exterior doors solid wood or steel?
- Are entrance doors equipped with 1” good quality dead bolt locks?
- Do you have 6” – 8” security strike plates that house and protect the bolt of the lock?
- Is the strike plate reinforced with 3” screws that pass through the door frame and into the wall stud?
- Do you have a floor mounted door stop?
- Is glass in the outside door at least 40” from the lock or unbreakable glass?
- Does your door fit snugly to the frame (within ¼”)?
- Do you have a patio door bar fastened into both the frame and the door to securely lock the door?

Garages

Garages are favourite targets because they often contain other valuables, such as power tools and bicycles.

- Are garage doors closed and locked when not in use?
- Does your automatic garage door opener use a “rolling code” system to prevent “code grabbing”?
- Does the overhead door have a track padlock for use while on vacation?
- If the garage door is not equipped with an electronic opener, does it have heavy-duty padlocks installed on both sides of the door?
- Is there a switch to shut off the automatic garage door?
- Is the door between your house and attached garage a solid core door with a deadbolt lock?
- Are other garage doors secured with deadbolt locks?
- Can the garage lights be turned on from inside the house?
- Do you have window security bars installed on your garage windows?
- Do you leave your garage door opener in a non-visible spot in your vehicle?
- Do you remove your keys from vehicles parked inside the garage even if the garage is locked?
- Do you remove all valuables from plain sight in your vehicle?
- Do you have window coverings on all windows?
- Have you installed outdoor lighting near your garage to keep the area lit at night?