



Neighbourhood Watch in Spain Association Vecinos Cooperando y Colaborando de España

How can I check to see if my home is secure?

- Are all exterior doors (including the garage) strong enough to withstand excessive force?
- Are exterior doors secured with a deadbolt lock that has a minimum one-inch throw?
- Are all strike plates and frames for each door strong enough to withstand excessive force?
- Are sliding glass doors and windows secure against forcing the locks or lifting the doors out of their frames?
- Are garage doors secured (overhead and side door leading into garage)?
- Are double-hung windows secured with pins or extra locks to discourage prying?
- If moving to a new residence, did you hire a reliable locksmith to re-key all exterior doors?

Many burglars will spend no longer than 60 seconds to try breaking into a home. Good locks, good lighting, and good neighbours who watch out for each other, can be big deterrent to burglars.

Check the Locks

Did you know that in almost half of all completed residential burglaries, thieves simply breezed in through unlocked doors or crawled through unlocked windows?

- Make sure every external door has a sturdy, well-installed dead bolt lock
- Sliding glass doors can offer easy access if they are not properly secured. You can secure them by installing commercially available locks or putting a broomstick or dowel in the inside track to jam the door. To prevent the door being lifted off the track, drill a hole through the sliding door frame and the fixed frame. Then insert a pin in the hole.
- Lock double-hung windows with key locks or "pin" windows by drilling a small hole at a 45 degree angle into the inner and outer frames, then insert a nail that can be

removed. Secure basement windows with grilles.

- Instead of hiding keys around the outside of your home, give an extra key to a neighbour you trust.
- When you move into a new house or apartment, re-key the locks.

Check the Doors

A lock on a flimsy door is about as effective as locking your car door but leaving the window down.

- All outside doors should be metal, PVC (frame steel reinforced) or solid wood.
- If your doors don't fit tightly in their frames, install weather stripping around them.
- Install a peephole or wide-angle viewer in all entry doors so you can see who is outside without opening the door. Door chains break easily and don't keep out intruders.

Check the Outside

Look at your house from the outside. Make sure you know the following tips:

- Thieves hate bright lights. Install outside lights and keep them on at night.
- Prune back shrubbery so it doesn't hide doors or windows. Cut back tree limbs that a thief could use to climb to an upper-level window.
- Clearly display your house number so police and other emergency vehicles can find your home quickly.
- If you travel, create the illusion that you're at home by getting some timers that will turn lights on and off in different areas of your house throughout the evening. Lights burning 24 hours a day signal an empty house.
- Leave shades, blinds, and curtains in normal positions
- Make a list of your valuables - VCRs, stereos, computers, jewellery. Take photos of the items, list their serial numbers and descriptions. Check with law enforcement about engraving your valuables through Operation Identification

How to Secure Your Home

The best door lock to use, with any material - solid wood, PVC (frame steel reinforced) or steel-clad doors is a double-cylinder deadbolt operated by a key from both sides. This is a must in doors where there is glass within 40 inches of the lock.

Doors should have high-quality locks that resist being picked, cut, or tampered with by burglars. The best kind of lock is a 5 lever mortise dead lock that requires a key to be opened from either side. This type of lock would take a burglar 30 mins. to break. Remember, if you're inside the house and the door is locked, you'll need a key to get out. So keep one handy in case of emergency.

Doors

Doors are the most common way of entry for burglars. They should be locked whether you're inside, in the yard, or away from home. They should be solid-core, PVC (frame steel reinforced) or steel-clad. Outside hinges should have internal pins to keep them from being lifted out. Doors with windowpanes should be reinforced with unbreakable glass or iron grillwork.

Windows

Burglars like open windows - or ones that open easily. Double-hung windows can be reinforced with just two nails. When both parts of the window are closed, drill a hole at a slightly downward angle in the upper corner of the lower sash, extending into the lower corner of the upper sash. Drill this angled hole on both the left - and right-hand sides of the doublehung window - and then insert the nails.

Sliding glass windows can be secured with a snugly fitting dowel in the track, a pin through the frame or keyed locks. Another method, also good for sliding glass doors, is to screw several pan-head sheet metal screws into the top of the frame; adjust the screws so you can just barely clear the door when sliding it.

Jalousie (louvre) windows can be secured by installing metal grating on the inside of the window or by gluing glass slats to the metal clips that hold them.

Drapes or shades should be left slightly open. A home or apartment looks deserted if they are drawn and closed.

Garage Windows

Keep windows locked. They also should be covered with shades or blinds and be reinforced with extra locks or bars.

Street Lights

Good streetlights deter crime. Report broken street lights

Exterior Lights

Floodlights deter burglars. Arrange them to illuminate all possible points of entry.

Indoor Lights

Don't leave indoor lights on 24 hours a day. Use timers to turn them on and off if you're not home.

Signs and Decals

Put alarm warning stickers or neighbourhood watch signs on doors or windows.

Garden Lights

Low-voltage lights on timers can light up walkways and driveways and help neighbours to see and report suspicious activities.

Driveway

Ask a neighbour to park a car in your driveway or in front of your house when you're on vacation.

Alarm System

There are various types of alarms - motion, spot, perimeter, wireless - each with its own strengths and weaknesses. Before buying one, consider your objectives: What are you trying to protect? How much money do you want to spend? Are there children or pets in the home?

Street Address

Make street numbers large and lighted or reflective so police or rescue workers can find your home quickly in an emergency.

Viewer (Peephole)

A wide-angle viewer - with 190-degree visibility - or door scope should be installed in the front door.

Shed & Storage boxes

Storage sheds, especially those containing ladders or tools that a burglar might use to break - should be kept locked.

Sliding Glass Doors

To prevent a sliding glass door from being lifted out of its tracks, fit a special lock to the central column. To further secure the door, drill a small hole at a downward angle in the overlap between the door and the frame, then insert a steel pin or heavy nail.

Valuables

Don't display your electronic equipment, cameras or computers. Keeping valuables in plain sight only makes it easier for burglars to see what they want to take.

Fences/walls

Fences and walls help keep burglars from carrying away large or bulky items. A wire-mesh fence provides visibility that a solid fence doesn't. If there is a gate, keep it locked.

Beware of Dog Sign

This can be a deterrent - even if you don't have a dog.

Landscaping

Keep shrubs and plants trimmed away from windows and doors so you don't give burglars a hiding place.

Deadbolt Locks

A single cylinder deadbolt should be mounted on a solid wood core door when there is no breakable glass within 40 inches of the locking device.

A double cylinder deadbolt lock, which is key operated from both the interior and exterior, should be used when there is glass within 40 inches of the locking device CAUTION: the use of a double-cylinder deadbolt lock can be a fire hazard. All family members and guests should be trained in the use of the lock and all other fire prevention methods.

Securing Your Windows

The window can then be pinned to prevent opening. However, there are several commercial key type locks that can be installed and these locks provide a greater degree of security. Also, a simple wooden dowel can be used to prevent the opening of the bottom window.

REMEMBER to master key all keyed locks and to train children in the use of locks.

REMEMBER windows left open while you are away or at night are open invitations to a burglar. Do not help the thief steal your property.

Sliding glass windows can be secured in the same manner as a sliding glass doors. Pins through the frame, screws in the track or keyed locks can all be used.

Casement windows provide good security. Keyed locks are also available for this type of window.

Jalousie windows are a very high security risk and should be replaced if at all possible. They can be secured by installing metal grating on the inside of the window area with a quick release feature in the event of fire. At a comparable cost to installing grating, the windows can be replaced with another, which offers better security.

Day-to- Day Safety Tips

- Make certain ALL doors and windows are locked before leaving (including garage).
- Do not leave keys hidden near exterior doors, under doormats, flower-pots, inside the mailbox or other obvious places.
- Never leave notes that can inform a burglar that your house is unoccupied.
- While away, have lights and a radio on a timer to give the appearance that the dwelling is occupied.
- Keep tools, ladders, etc., in places inaccessible to potential burglars.
- Lock the doors to your home when working in the garden or a secluded part of your house. Keep your keys with you at all times.
- Don't open your door to strangers. Ask for identification of people such as gasmen, repairmen, charity workers, etc.
- Be cautious about providing any information regarding yourself or your neighbours over the phone or in person.
- Avoid leaving valuables (coin collections, jewellery, large amounts of cash) at home.
- When moving to a new residence, hire a reliable locksmith to re-key all exterior doors. If possible, have the locksmith make the key to fit all locks.
- Keep emergency numbers near your phone for quick access.

Safety Tips While on Holiday

- Inform your neighbours when you leave and when you plan to return so they can be extra alert for suspicious persons. Leave a key with a trusted neighbour so your house may be periodically inspected. If possible, arrange for a friend or relative to "house-sit" for you while you are gone.
- Ask a neighbour to park in your driveway.
- Set the bell on your telephone on low so that it can't be heard from the street

- Use automatic timers to turn lights on at dusk and off at your bedtime. Vary the lights to be turned on and have a radio on a timer. Never leave lights or the radio on constantly. Tune your radio to a talk show so that human voices are heard.
- Don't publicise your vacation plans.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked so no one can see if your car is gone.
- If possible, tell a neighbour where you can be reached in an emergency.
- If you return and find a door or window has been forced or broken while you were absent, do not enter. The criminal may still be inside. Go to a neighbour and call 112.
- If you have a phone answering machine, do NOT leave specific information about whether you are away on holiday e.g. "Please leave a message and I will call you back on my return from the UK on Thursday"