

Life, Health, & Wealth

Tips To Secure Your Castle

“A man’s home is his castle” and, as such, it should be a safe haven for the owner, his family, and his personal effects.

When your home is broken into, the impact can be significant – financially and emotionally. You may have expensive repair and replacement costs, and you and your family will likely be traumatized knowing that you are vulnerable to burglars.

While no property can be 100% secure, there are steps you can take to make your home safer:

- **Always make your home look occupied.** Keep several lights on inside your home during the night, and when you go out in the evening. Consider installing automatic timers to specific lamps to turn them on in the evening and off in the morning. Don’t leave notes on your door telling visitors that no one is at home (e.g., “Back soon”).
- **Ensure that your doors – and even windows - have high standard locks.** Door hinges should be on the inside. Install deadbolt locks on all your exterior doors. Sliding glass doors are especially vulnerable; special locks are available for increased security. Burglar bars and screens add significant security for doors and windows. Ask a qualified locksmith or security company for advice on your home’s situation.
- **Change locks immediately if your keys are lost or stolen.** When you move into a new home, have all the locks changed immediately.
- **Always lock your doors and windows when you leave your house** – even if you’re just visiting your neighbor or gardening in the backyard.
- **Keep your garage door closed and locked.** Use window coverings on garage and basement windows.
- **Leave spare keys with a trusted neighbor or friend** – not under the doormat, plant pot, or other “hidden” spots. Burglars are skilled in knowing where to look for keys.
- **Ask a neighbor or friend to check your house** regularly when you’re away for an extended period of time. He or she can collect your newspapers or any packages left on your doorstep, which otherwise alert a burglar to your absence.
- **Consider having a safe installed** if you have valuable items, documents, and jewelry.
- **Keep a current, detailed inventory** of your valuable possessions, including receipts. Take photographs of valuable objects such as antique furniture or family heirlooms.
- **Install an alarm system** that is monitored by a reputable firm. And, remember to activate your system whenever you’re away from your house. Alarm companies often provide a small sign to be installed on your exterior front wall confirming that your home is being monitored.
- If your family likes pets, **consider having a dog** for added protection.
- **Keep your garden well maintained** with trees and shrubs trimmed regularly to give a clear view of your house and to prevent burglars using them as hiding places. Ask a neighbor or friend to see that your lawn is mowed regularly if you are going to be away for a week or more.
- **Install adequate lighting outside** your house and consider motion-sensitive lights for strategic points in your garden.
- **Store all tools,** gardening equipment (especially ladders), and bicycles in a shed or the garage.
- **Join a Neighborhood Watch** group and be an active part of crime prevention in your community.
- **Call the police** immediately to report a crime or any suspicious activity.



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