



## Some Practical Suggestions to Limit Risk of Burglary in Your Home

Whether you are away for a few hours, days or weeks, there are some basic steps you can take to safeguard your home. Burglars often watch homes to see when people are or aren't there and plan to make their moves accordingly. It doesn't take much, or long, for someone to enter your home and grab your most prized possessions.

### Daily Procedures

If you have an alarm system installed – use it, even if just popping out to the local stores, plus keep windows and doors shut and locked when not in the house.

It has been estimated by various web based security organisations that 30 % of burglaries happen through an open or unlocked window or door. Nearly 66 % of all burglaries are residential break-ins. Renters are just as likely to be the victims of property crime as homeowners. It is important to note that the highest percentage of burglaries occur during the summer months. Homes without security systems are up to 300% more likely to be broken into.

### In addition

85 % of these burglaries are performed by “non-professionals” who are usually males under the age of 25 seeking to feed a drug habit and these perpetrators are the most dangerous. These thieves look for easy access, through unlocked doors or windows and the type of tools used to break in are usually simple; a screwdriver, pliers, pries bars, and small hammers. These thieves are looking for small and expensive items that can quickly be sold for cash. Their favourite items to steal include, but are not limited to: cash, jewellery, laptops, guns, digital cameras, and small electronics such as iPods and iPhones.

Thieves will select a home based on a very simple selection process. They want unoccupied homes with easy access; this can be a window or an unlocked door or a door that is easily broken into. Thieves also want the greatest amount of cover and the simplest best escape routes. Homeowners often make this selection process easy for thieves by failing to take simplest precautions. If you have an alarm system, use it. If not, you might want to consider purchasing one. Keep hedges well-trimmed and install external lighting, these can be sensor lights or simply on a timer, engage with the local neighbourhood watch and do all you can to make your home as secure as you feel you need, but do not ignore simple suggestions.

### When away, make the home look used and lived in.

It is crucial not to let others think your house is sitting vacant for any significant amount of time. If you don't already have timers for your lights, purchase a few. You do not want to leave the house and leave all your lights on. First, this is a terrible waste of natural energy but thieves will notice if the lights do not go on and off. Place various lamps on timers set for different times so that the lights will go on and off at various intervals. You may want to have a radio or television on a timer as well.

Noise coming from a home is a good thing. On the same note, turn down your telephone's ringer so that no one will hear the phone go unanswered. And while we are on the subject of telephones never leave a message on your machine indicating that you are on vacation. You may want to have your calls forwarded to a cell number that you can access.

### Keep local foliage and gardens well maintained.

If you use a local landscaping service do not stop them from coming to take care of your property. Trimmed hedges keep windows in plain view and are less tempting to a potential thief. Manicured lawns make it seem as though you are home maintaining your own property. If you are away and do not have a landscaping service, you may want to employ a local trusted neighbour or their offspring to come and mow your lawn for you. Install outside lighting with motion sensors that will automatically turn on when someone approaches the property and keep the outside of your home lit as much as you possibly can.



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## **Before you leave Greyton.**

Always do a last minute check to ensure that all of your doors and windows are locked and dead bolted if possible. Do not forget about screened-in porches and garage points of entry. Check the batteries on your smoke detectors and unplug all non-essential items including electrical items such as the TV and radio, unless you have timers attached. Walk around your home and unplug everything you will not use including clocks, toaster ovens, printers, stereo systems, video and gaming units, and most especially any and all computers, laptops, televisions and cable boxes. Loss of power and electrical surges can irreparably damage these expensive items.

If it is wintertime, do turn the heat down, but do not turn it off as doing so may result in burst pipes which are both a major inconvenience as well as a major expense.

## **A good habit to get in to.**

If you have a garage, you should really try to get in the habit of always keeping your car in your garage. Many of us use our garages for extra storage space and many of these garages are quite full leaving no room for your car. It would be worth it to clear out your garage space for your car. A potential thief may notice that a car that is almost always in the driveway is suddenly gone for a few days. It is also imperative that you lock your garage door. Your garage door should have a locking mechanism at the bottom. There are universal remotes that a thief could use to open yours.

If you have pets you may want to hire a house sitter instead of putting them in a kennel. And even homeowners that do not have pets may feel safer with a house sitter.

If you do not have or want a house sitter, notify a trusting neighbour and friend that you will be away and ask them kindly to check in on your home from time to time. You may also want to notify the police and or your security/alarm company who may also drive by your home from time to time during your absence.

## **Keep off social media.**

As tempting as it may be to tell others that you are luxuriating in the lap of paradise, stay away from social media. Keep your travel plans quiet and away from any public arena. While it is fun to post pictures of crystal blue waters, pink sandy beaches save these photos to be uploaded after your return. This applies to all avenues of social media including but not limited to blogs, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Finally, keep your valuables tucked away and hidden from view. You don't want a potential thief to glance in a window and see televisions, gaming devices and laptops that can quickly be taken from your home. You may want to invest in a home safe and keep items locked in there.

Contact our admin department for more information on 028 254 9906.

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