

Crime Proofing Your Home

Residential break and enters are all too common occurrences in most Cities. One fact remains consistent: each home, unless suitably secured, will offer the opportunity for a break, enter and theft to occur. The various points of entry to a home are the potential target areas through which a burglar/thief can gain access to your home and valuables. An opportunistic thief looks for the target offering the least amount of security and resistance to reduce his chances of detection.

Every home owner must take into consideration the weaknesses presented by their home and identify the target areas requiring attention. For example a door with a lock in the knob should be re-enforced with an auxiliary lock.

A garage with a direct access to a residence should be secured while the home owner is away for any length of time.

The following information provides the home owner with basic information about techniques to secure doors and windows. Some require the expertise of a locksmith and others are do-it-yourself methods. Any decision regarding security improvements should be carefully appraised by taking lifestyle, home location, and budget into consideration.

- **Through The Door Viewers** - To avoid opening your door without knowing who is there, install a through door viewer with a wide angle lens (180 degree). This will allow you to see someone standing to one side of the door. These devices are inexpensive and will adjust to varying door thickness.
- **Letter Boxes** - The accumulation of newspapers and mail in an undersized Letter box not only exposes them to the elements but also indicates to burglars that no one is home to retrieve the deliveries. A large Letter box will protect the mail and serve to keep it out of sight of would-be burglars.
- **Householder's identification** - House numbers should be large, visible and lighted at night to help emergency personnel locate your home quickly. The same type of number mounted at the rear of the house will help those approaching from a back lane or street. To make them more visible, the numbers should be made in a contrasting color to their background.
- **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH...**

Part of being a good neighbor means keeping a friendly eye out for each other, or being alert to occasions when help might be needed. A hundred years ago, this was common practice. Survival, after all, depended on co-operative support, but this aspect of our heritage has changed. Today we rely on professionals to do things for us, so it seems only natural that we've gradually transferred to an expanding law enforcement network.

Ironically, Crime has grown faster than the police agencies we've established to "look after" it. Recent evidence suggests that no matter how much money is poured into increasing police patrols and investigations, crime rates will not decrease proportionately.

Clearly, it is time that we tried a fresh approach and the easiest and most obvious place to start is by being good neighbors, willing to help protect each other's interests. This is the prime objective of "Neighborhood Watch". On the right is the symbol on the signs as you enter a Neighborhood Watch area.

Neighborhood Watch is a Community - based crime prevention program, organized and operated by concerned residents in any neighborhood. The purpose of the program is to encourage all residents in the program to become more aware of criminal activities which have occurred or which or might occur in the area; to be alert to suspicious persons or vehicles, and to be assertive of their right to enjoy a safe and secure neighborhood, free of crime. This, accompanied by steps to improve home security greatly reduces the occurrence of property crime.

Neighborhood Watch does not however, advocate citizen patrols or vigilantism. The police are still responsible for the confrontation of suspicious individuals and making any necessary arrests. The end result of a well run Neighborhood Watch Program is an atmosphere of "unity of purpose," improved community spirit and a reduction in crime.