

Home Security

Criminals usually look for the easiest targets, and often crimes such as burglary, theft, and theft from motor vehicles are crimes of opportunity. If you can eliminate the opportunity, you can greatly reduce your chances of becoming a victim. Common sense and a little prevention can save you a great deal of headache later. Following are some security tips for at home.

- Make sure all exterior doors are solid wood or metal-clad for security. Use dead bolt locks with a 1-inch throw and a strike plate secured with at least two-inch screws.
- Keep doors locked at all times, including during the day when you are home. Sometimes, a person may enter the wrong home accidentally if they are given a wrong address or are confused, so avoid being surprised.
- If you move into a new home or apartment, install new locks. You never know how many extra keys are floating around.
- If your front door doesn't have a peephole, have a wide-angle viewer installed.
- Keep excess cash and valuables in a safe deposit box. Have pension and Social Security checks deposited directly into your account.
- Engrave all of your electronics and other valuable items with your driver's license number to deter theft. You can borrow an engraver from the Janesville Police Department at no charge.
- If you are a single female living alone, use only your first initial and last name in the telephone book and on your mailbox (especially if you are living in an apartment).
- Keep windows and patio doors locked with special locks. With some types of locks you can lock a window or patio door open a few inches for ventilation.
- At night, use dusk-to-dawn lights in back yards and in front of the garage.
- If you are going to be away on vacation or just for the weekend, have a trusted neighbor watch your property, pick up your mail, and park their car in your driveway to give the appearance that someone is home. Make use of timers on some of the lights and leave some of the drapes open. A house that is all closed up is a sure sign that someone is probably not home.

Home Security Do's and Don't

- Double-Hung windows can be made more secure by drilling a hole through the first window frame and into the second, then inserting a nail or bolt into the hole. By drilling the holes at different heights, you can also lock a window left partly open for ventilation. Window locks are another option and are available at your local hardware or do-it-yourself center.
- A cylinder lock with a 1-inch long deadbolt provides good home security. Unlike the common key-in-knob door lock, this one is hard to break or pry open. Also, make sure the strike plate is secured with wood screws that are at least 2" in length. To guard against prying the lock, latch guards can be installed covering the lock's latch or deadbolt.
- Leave your patio or porch lights on when you go out for the evening. Leaving lights on inside your home is a good idea too. Motion lights mounted to a garage or above a patio door also add extra security.
- Trim shrubs away from doors and windows so they won't hide someone trying to break in. Plant prickly bushes near basement windows.
- Make sure the locks on all your windows are in good working order including your basement windows.

- **Always lock your garage**-it's one of the burglar's favorite targets. If you have a garage that is attached to your house, be sure to lock the connecting door between the house and garage with a very secure lock such as a dead bolt. It is a very easy for someone to enter your house through a connecting door. If you do remember to lock the connecting door, do you remember to take the keys out of your parked car? It doesn't pay to lock the door and then leave the key to it in plain sight!
- Check to make sure that your house number can be seen from the street so emergency help can find you fast when you need it.
- Have a neighbor watch your house while you are away on vacation. Having someone cut your grass or shovel the sidewalk in winter helps to preserve that "lived-in look" while you're away.
- Don't hide spare keys outside your home where "no one would ever look." A burglar knows where to look for spare keys and finding one makes his job a lot easier.
- You should think twice before putting an ID tag with your address on your key ring. If you lose your keys and the wrong person finds them, it's an open invitation to a burglary.
- Don't let strangers in your house for any reason. If a repairman seems suspicious, ask him for identification first.
- Don't leave a note on the door that indicates you are gone and won't be back until a certain time.
- Don't keep large amounts of money, valuable coins or jewelry around the house. Use a bank safety deposit box instead.
- Don't give information to strangers over the phone regarding vacation plans, hours of work, etc.
- Don't let newspapers or mail pile up while you're away as a sign no one is home. Instead, stop these deliveries or have a neighbor pick these up for you until you return.
- Most sliding patio doors have simple locks that are easy to pry open. Putting a broomstick or a 2 x 4 in the sliding door track will help keep the door closed, even if someone has forced open the lock. Or, install locks especially made for patio doors.
- There are several types of surface-mounted door locks that you can use to add more security to your home or garage. Most are easy to install, and those with sliding deadbolts are especially hard to pry open.
- Many burglaries happen because a burglar can break a window, reach in and unlock your door from the inside. To avoid this, you can install a double-cylinder deadbolt lock that requires a key on the outside and the inside. But remember, this lock could block your escape in an emergency so this type should only be used in a garage or business and never in a residence. Another option is to replace the glass in the door with an unbreakable acrylic or use security screen over the glass on the inside of the door.

Most important of all: keep your doors and windows locked as much as possible. Keep all doors and windows locked whenever possible, including during the day when someone is at home and if you're leaving your home for only a few minutes. All exterior doors should be secured with a dead bolt lock with a 1-inch throw and 2-inch screws in the strike plate. The "throw" refers to how far the bolt sticks out of the door when you have the door open and the bolt in "lock" position. The reason that the throw should be at least 1-inch long is so that the bolt goes past the thin trim board. This makes the trim board less likely to splinter if someone tries to kick the door in. Two-inch screws should also be used to fasten door hinges to the door jamb. And remember, even the best lock is worthless if you don't use it.

For additional information, please call the Janesville Police Department at (608) 755-3133.