

BURGLARY PREVENTION TIPS

Burglary is a crime of opportunity. Make their work risky and difficult, and you stand a good chance of stopping them before they get in.

YOUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

To a burglar visibility means vulnerability. They hide behind fences and shrubbery. The key is to keep trespassers out while keeping your property visible. Use picket or chain link fences. Keep hedges clipped down around the waist.

ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

Burglars try the doors and windows first and if they encounter difficulty here, chances are they will move on to another property.

DOORS

- **Locks-** Use the strongest *deadbolt* locks with a minimum 1" throw bolt containing a hardened, saw-resistant steel insert. Attach the strike plate to the door frame with 4" screws. The *double cylinder deadbolt* lock requires a key from both sides, preventing a burglar from breaking glass in the door and turning the knob from the inside. Make sure the cylinder of the lock has a steel guard—a ring around the key section.

Remember, though, a double cylinder deadbolt can also block your exit in an emergency. Check with your local law enforcement agency or building inspector to see if these locks are permitted in your area.

- **Hinges-** Doors that swing out have hinges on the outside. A burglar can easily remove the hinge pins and lift the door out. To foil this, remove the center screw from each side of the hinge and insert a metal pin or headless screw on one side. When the door is closed, the end of the pin will fit into the opposite hole. Thus, even if the pins are removed, the door will remain bolted to the frame.
- **Padlocks-** Overhead doors, receiving doors, garage doors—all are typically secured with padlocks and hasps. Look for sturdy padlocks that don't release the key until the padlock is closed. The padlock should be case-hardened with a 3/8" shackle to resist repeated smashing. Remember, a padlock is only as good as the hasps on which it is mounted; so bolt hasps securely to a metal plate, and make sure the bolts are concealed when the padlock is closed.
- **Door Construction-** Burglars can kick in a weak door. Replace *hollow core doors* with *solid core doors*, or strengthen the existing ones with metal sheets. Replace weak door frames, or reinforce them with steel or concrete. Protect

glass in the door with steel bars or mesh; or place a polycarbonate sheet over the glass on the inside.

WINDOWS

Protect windows by putting grates, grill work, or bars over them; or cover the glass on the inside with a clear polycarbonate sheet. The sheet should extend 1-1/2" beyond the perimeter of the glass and be bolted to the door. Space the bolts approximately every 3 inches. Unbreakable safety glass is also available, but it is more expensive.

OTHER ENTRANCES

Skylights, ventilation ducts, and fire escapes tempt burglars because these openings usually are not visible from the street. Protect skylights and ducts with metal grates and iron bars. The first stair of a fire escape should be too high for the average adult to reach from the ground. The door or window leading to the fire escape should be equipped with emergency exit features: window guards should be removable or hinged to allow for an emergency exit. Keys to locked windows or doors should be kept nearby, but not in the lock.

KEY CONTROL

Because any lock gives way to a key, practice good key control.

- **Label keys with a code indicating back door, receiving door, display case, etc.**
- **Engrave "Do Not Duplicate" on all keys.**
- **Restrict key-access to your most trusted family members, friends, or employees. Maintain a log to record key removal and return (businesses).**
- **Consider having locks re-keyed when an employee leaves your business, or when renters move from your building.**

ALARMS

After installing an alarm, let burglars know by putting warning signs in windows and entrances. Every alarm system should include:

- **A fail-safe battery backup**
- **Fire-sensing capability**
- **A feedback device to check the system.**

CHECK THE OUTSIDE

- **Keep your house, driveway, barns and other buildings well-lighted at night. Use timers that automatically turn on outside lights when it gets dark.**
- **Consider motion sensors that set off lights or alarms.**
- **Prune back shrubbery that hides doors, windows, lights, and would be burglars.**
- **Keep your fences in good repair. Secure all access roads with gates or cables stretched between two posts cemented in the ground. Make them visible with flags or streamers.**

- **Warn thieves that you're on the alert with "No Trespassing" or "No Hunting" and other signs around your property.**

Other Crime Prevention Tips

- **Keep an eye out for your neighbor, report suspicious vehicles or persons that are hanging in your area.**
- **Stop delivery of your mail and newspaper when you go away.**
- **Utilize the Sheriff's Office vacation check program when on vacation or have a good neighbor, friend or family member check your property while you are away.**

*****REMEMBER*****

Locks and alarms can't prevent a burglary unless they're in use. Establish a routine for "closing up shop", locking doors and windows, and setting alarms. Also call and report all burglaries and thefts to your local police department.

Bracken County Sheriff Office 606-735-3233 or in emergency situations 911.