



CITY OF PITTSBURGH

"AMERICA'S MOST LIVABLE CITY"

Office of Mayor Luke Ravenstahl

Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Crime Prevention Tips

Burglary Basics

- Make your home look occupied and make it difficult to break-in.
- Leave lights on when you go out. If you are going to be away for any length of time, connect lamps to automatic timers to turn lights on during the evening and off during the day.
- Lock all outside doors and windows before you leave the house – for any period of time – and before you go to bed. Do not leave windows and doors open when sleeping, especially where perpetrators can easily access your home.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked.
- Don't allow daily deliveries of mail to build up while you are away. If you will be gone from the home for several days, arrange to have the mail, newspapers and flyers stopped or picked up, and for your lawn to be mowed. Half of all home burglaries occur during the day, when alert neighbors could spot and report thieves or suspicious activity.
- Sliding glass doors are vulnerable. Simply putting a pole in the track of the door keeps the door from being opened. Most windows can also be pinned for security. This will secure the window from opening.

Don't Tempt a Thief

- Lawn mowers, snow blowers, barbecues and bicycles are best stored out of sight or in a secured area.
- Always lock your garden sheds and garages.
- Use curtains or coverings on garage or basement windows. Installed glass block on basement and garage windows helps deter burglars.

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- Never leave notes on your door indicating that you are away from the home.

Invest in the Best Locks Possible

- No lock, regardless of the quality, can be truly effective. Key-in deadbolt locks provide minimum security. Consult with a locksmith for advice concerning your situation.
- Push-button locks on doors knobs are easy for burglars to open. Install deadbolts on all of your outside doors.
- Check your locks on doors and windows and replace them with secure devices as necessary. Check locks on all windows and consult a locksmith for other alternatives if needed.
- Change locks immediately if your keys are lost or stolen.
- Sliding glass doors are vulnerable. Special locks are available for better security. Simply putting a pole in the track of the door keeps the door from being opened.
- Lock double hung windows by sliding a bolt or nail into a hole drilled at a downward angle through the top of each sash and into the frame.
- When moving into a new home, have all locks changed.

Targeting the Outside of the Home

- Have adequate exterior lighting. A motion-sensitive light is recommended for backyard areas.
- Trim trees and shrubs so that they cannot be used as a hiding place for intruders.
- Ensure that your door hinges are located on the inside.

Alarm Systems

- An alarm system is excellent for home security. It provides peace of mind to the homeowner, especially while on vacation. There are a wide variety of alarm systems on the market.

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- Make sure you look into several different companies for the best security system available to you and for your needs.

If Your Home is Broken Into

If you come home and find an unexplained open/broken window or door...

- DO NOT enter – the perpetrator may still be inside.
- Use your cell phone or a neighbor’s phone to call 911.
- Note any suspicious person or vehicle seen in and around your home or neighborhood. Report it immediately to police. Provide a description of the person, type of clothing, type of vehicle and license plate, if possible.

Other Precautions You Should Take

- Never leave keys under doormats, flowerpots, mailboxes or other “secret” hiding places - burglars know where to look for keys.
- Leave only your ignition key with mechanics or parking attendants.
- Keep a detailed inventory of your valuable possessions, including a description of the items, date of purchase and original value, serial numbers, and keep this information in a safe place away from the home. This is also a good practice in the event of other types of disasters. Take photos or a video of the contents of your home and valuable items, heirlooms and antiques. Your insurance company can provide assistance in making and keeping your inventory.
- Mark your valuables with your driver’s license number on an engraver you can borrow from the police zone in your area. Marked items make it harder for a burglar to dispose of and easier for police to recover.
- Be a good neighbor. If you notice anything suspicious, call 911 immediately.
- Form a neighborhood block watch and work with your neighbors and police to establish professional working relationships to improve security and reduce the risk of burglaries in your community. The Crime Prevention Officer in your zone can assist in this effort. Visit pittsburghpa.gov/bwib for more information about block watches and to receive Mayor Ravenstahl’s “Block Watch in a Box.”

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