



CRIME PREVENTION BULLETIN

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY PREVENTION

Purpose

The Purpose of this Burglary Prevention bulletin is to provide our community partners with information to assist them in helping reduce their likelihood in becoming a victim of a burglary. There are steps you can take at home to make your residence a harder target for burglars. We will also introduce you to an introductory version of a concept called CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).

Introduction

If you have never stepped back and looked at your residence from the perspective of a would-be criminal, you should take a moment and do so. Where do you think your vulnerabilities are? But do not stop there. Think beyond that.

A burglary is often a crime of opportunity. The offenders generally look for an easy target, so making their job more difficult, or more risky, reduces the appeal to most criminals. Burglars will most often try for unlocked windows and doors as a means of entry. If you have windows and doors that create a challenge to criminals, they may move on to something easier. Burglars also want to remain unseen if possible. Proper lighting, landscaping, natural access control, and other concepts, are forms of Environmental Design that can make your home an easy target, or a harder target. We will explain CPTED in more detail in a separate Crime Prevention bulletin, but here are some basics.

Lighting and Landscaping

Again, burglars want to remain unseen. Proper and sufficient lighting around the perimeter of your home will serve as a deterrent. Ensure lighting is working properly, and use energy efficient bulbs when possible. You can install motion activated lights or ask your utility company to install a light on a utility pole for a small monthly fee if you have one near your home. Lights should be installed high enough to prevent someone from having access to the fixtures. Lights can be set on timers both outside and inside the residence to give the appearance someone is home. Landscaping should not assist with allowing someone opportunities to hide near your home or provide a barrier for detection. Trim trees and shrubs back to improve natural surveillance.

Doors and Windows

Doors should be solid core wood or steel construction. There are some other types of doors, such as fiberglass, that offer some of the same qualities. You do not want a hollow-core door on the exterior of a house. Locks should include deadbolts with at least a 1" throw bolt. The strike plate should attach through the jamb and into the wall studs with 3 ½ " screws. Glass in the main door or a side panel should be of sufficient quality to prevent easy entry by just breaking the glass and reaching in to turn the lock. Double cylinder deadbolt's are an option but carefully consider that option and check local building codes. In the event of an emergency, these locks may hinder your safe egress. If your door swings out, make sure the hinge pins cannot be easily removed. Patio doors can also be improved by providing "Charlie Bars" and pins to prevent the patio door from being slid over and lifted out of its track. Make sure other entry points are identified and steps taken to secure those as well. These may include skylights, openings created by a small window air conditioner, or a crawl space entry door.

Alarms

A residential security alarm can be a great deterrent. Some are silent and some are audible. An alarm can scare an intruder away when they fear the likelihood of apprehension is greater because an alarm has been activated. Carefully consider the costs of an alarm and compare it to your needs. What are you trying to protect and what risks do you have? Find a reputable alarm company to help you evaluate your needs.

Summary

None of the ideas we have discussed will help you unless they are used properly. If you fail to lock your doors and windows, and fail to turn on security lights and alarm, they will not help you much. Make sure your numerical address is clearly visible and illuminated on the front, and sometimes in the back, of your residence. Work with your neighbors to get to know them so that together, you can help each other out by looking for things that are suspicious. If something looks out of place, call the police. Have a written record of your valuables with serial numbers documented. Keep certain valuables in a safe inside your home, and keep weapons locked up and away from children.

Review our **Home Security and Safety Checklist** bulletin for more useful information. This tool can help you identify certain vulnerabilities to your residence, which can lead to ideas on how to make your home a harder target for would-be offenders.

The Lafayette Police Department's Crime Prevention efforts are meant to strengthen the partnership between our members, and the community that we serve. We hope that together, we can make our community safer.