

Protecting Your Home and Your Belongings

The term “Home Sweet Home” has taken on a whole new meaning these days with the increase in “Home Burglary” and “Home Invasion” incidents. These would-be felons wish to claim your “home sweet home” as their own. Therefore, it’s my desire as your elected Sheriff to provide you with some safeguard measures to preclude you from becoming a statistic as indicated below.

According to the latest “FBI Crime Data Report”, there were in excess of 500,000 burglary incidents in the US in 2021. Of that total 400,000 incidence were committed at residential homes. According to the “US Department of Justice”, a burglary is considered a home invasion when a resident is at home, which is the case 30% of the time.

Although burglaries can and do happen at any time, they are most common during daylight hours, and burglary numbers spike during the summer months. By learning how to properly secure and protect your home against invasions or burglaries at any time of the day or night, you can reduce your chances of being victimized.

You can begin protecting yourself, and your property by evaluating your home’s vulnerability, changing your habits when you leave and putting other measures in place that could improve your home security.

The Following Will Provide You with Some Measures You Should Consider

- ***Become Neighbor Friendly***

What’s good for your neighborhood is good for your home. By making it clear to burglars that you live in a place where neighbors look out for each other, they may be deterred from taking chances with your home. Establish a rapport with your neighbors so that they can be your “eyes and ears” when you are not at home.

- ***Keep Curtains and Blinds Closed after Dark***

Windows offer you a view to the outside, but unfortunately, it goes both ways. Criminals may look through windows to scout potential burglary targets, or to evaluate whether residents are home. Try not to leave valuables in plain sight near windows.

- ***Install Smart Locks***

Even with the best of intentions and good habits, anyone can forget to lock entry doors to their home on occasion. Many “Smart Lock Systems” will allow you to check the status of your doors remotely when away and lock anything that wasn’t secured. With smart locks available at a variety of price points, this is a good option for homes in which residents frequently come and go.

- ***Invest in a Home Security System***

The gold standard when it comes to home security measures is installing a reliable home security system from a company that can professionally install and monitor the system, to DIY options that still offer great protection against home burglaries.

- ***Install Motion-Sensing Lights***

With options available for less than \$50, motion-sensing floodlights will shine an unwelcome light on anyone who trespasses outside your home, which is a good deterrent against

unwelcomed visitors. Inside the home, you can set motion-sensing smart lights to activate when you are out of the house, and an uninvited guest enters. If you're on vacation, this can also signal to any neighbors who are keeping watch that something isn't right.

- **Vacation Planning with Security in Mind**

Before going on a trip, create a strategy to help your house look occupied while you're away. This includes putting your mail and deliveries on hold. Additionally, consider asking a neighbor to handle your trash day duties and check in on the house routinely and if you will be away for an extended period, consider scheduling routine lawn maintenance.

- **Change your Daily Routines**

There's a reason many break-ins occur during the day. That's when residence are likely to be away from the home. Although your work schedule may be constant, try to keep your comings and goings unknown as much as possible. Strange as it might seem, according to FBI statistics, at least one-in-three burglars are known to the victim, such as the victim's friend, neighbor, or family member.

- **Keep your Doors Locked and Garage Shut**

If doors are left unlocked, or the garage is open, burglars can enter when you go out for a walk, or even just in the yard. According to home security company, ADT, 34% of burglars enter through the front door, 22% coming through the back door and 9% walk through the garage.

- **Avoid Confrontation with Anyone You Suspect is an Evil Doer**

Always remember "Things" are far less important than your safety and the safety of your loved ones. Therefore, if you suspect that someone is on or near your property or the property of a neighbor is potentially an evil doer avoid any contact with the individual, and immediately without hesitation, call 911 for assistance and provide the operator with as much information as possible, to include your name, your address a description of the individual causing you concern and follow the directions provided you by the 911 operator.

In conclusion, it's my hope that you will find the information I am providing helpful, and I look forward to sharing more of my knowledge and experiences, and the knowledge and experiences of my senior law-enforcement professionals with the community of San Jacinto County and beyond.

Sincerely,
Greg Capers
Sheriff of San Jacinto County