

SAFE AT HOME

EACH YEAR 1 IN 12 HOMES ARE TARGETED BY A BURGLAR.

EVERY 15 SECONDS A HOME IS BURGLARIZED IN THE U.S.

MORE BURGLARIES OCCUR DURING SUMMER THAN ANY OTHER TIME OF THE YEAR.

ROBBERIES ACCOUNT FOR 38% OF VIOLENT CRIME AGAINST SENIORS.

LOSSES DUE TO BURGLARIES WERE OVER \$4.3 BILLION IN 2007

60% OF ALL BURGLARIES OCCUR DURING THE DAYTIME

IN 50% OF ALL BURGLARIES, THE PERPETRATOR GAINED ENTRANCE THROUGH AN UNLOCKED DOOR OR WINDOW

— Statistics courtesy of ADT Corporation

UNDERSTANDING THE INTRUDER

1. WHO ARE THE TYPICAL INTRUDERS?

- * Most intruders are not detailed planners other than observing daily movement patterns
 - Planning is sketchy at best...but most have good network for neighborhood detail
- * Cannot typically disarm an electronic burglar alarm system
- * The more desperate and less rational a potential burglar the more likely they are to:
 - challenge an electronic security system & ignore a siren
 - break windows/doors & ignore noise
 - not fear or avoid confrontation with residents

Alarm systems protect against break ins when home is unoccupied

Tight perimeter protects against intrusion when home is occupied

- outdoor flood lights
- strong front and back doors with dead bolt locks
- window contacts/glass break detectors/screen detectors)

2. WHAT DO THEY NEED

- * Entry in less than one minute (will pass if more time needed)
 - * Entry usually through unlocked front or back door
 - * Secondary source of entry is unlocked window
 - * Third source is kicking in a door

- * 5-10 minutes inside (master bedroom primary target)
- * Minimum value of \$50-\$100 for items stolen
- * 3-4 replications per day
- * Market for stolen goods
 - * Friends, relatives
 - * Bars
 - * "To-order" customers
 - * Pawn shops, fences

3. WHAT THEY TAKE

- * Prefer cash, jewelry, electronics, drugs and guns
- * Everyone is assumed to have "something" worth stealing
- * Occasional "jackpot" accepted but not planned for

4. HOW THEY KNOW MORE LUCRATIVE TARGETS

- * Quality of car(s)/house
- * Quality of landscaping & home care
- * Informants
- * Return engagements
- * Someone they know slightly (from parties) or even well (dates)
- * Drug dealers
- * Targets of opportunity chosen at the moment

5. VULNERABILITY INDICATORS OF POTENTIAL TARGETS

- * Well-concealed doors and windows (from neighbors, passers-by,

police patrols)

- * **Home appears to be unoccupied (papers, mail, just left, etc.)**
- * **No indications of electronic security (signs, stickers, etc.)**
- * **Within a few blocks of major highway**
- * **Adjacent to wooded area or park**
- * **Home unoccupied at regular times each day**
- * **Electronics or artwork visible through a window**

PROTECTING YOUR HOME

Creating a safe home requires more than keeping your doors locked, but that is a good place to start. To make your home the safest possible refuge for you and your family, safety experts recommend the following:

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Take a walk around your home and think like a burglar. As you walk, ask yourself "Where is the easiest access point to my home?"
2. Inspect entry doors and door frames. External doors should be hinged from the inside, not the outside where burglars can simply un-screw the hinge. If you have sliding doors, place a bar or wooden dowel in the inside track to supplement the door lock. Better yet, install a "charlie bar" on all sliding doors.
3. Check doors (including the garage door) and windows for security and replace worn or inoperable locks. If the window is bare, install a blind or curtain over the inside so the contents cannot be viewed from outside.
4. If the basement windows are the most likely place where a thief might gain entry, install a lock on the door that leads from the basement into your living area. Better yet, install a metal or metal clad door.

5. Never leave windows open at night unless they are open just a few inches (too little space for someone to crawl in) **and secured with pin locks.**
6. When putting out your trash, break down or cut up boxes that indicate you have purchased an expensive or desirable item. Such items include electronic equipment (stereo, TV, DVD player, computer, etc.), furs, jewelry, collectables, etc. An empty box in the trash may tell a potential burglar that what he wants is probably in your house.
7. Keep the garage door closed except when leaving or entering. Open garage doors are the number one entry point for daytime burglaries.
8. Always keep the door **between** the garage and the house locked, whether you are home or away.
9. Turn on outside lights after dark.
10. Make sure house numbers are easily viewed.
11. Don't display your name on the exterior of your house.
12. Store ladders and tools inside a locked garage, shed or basement, not outside where they can be used to break in.
13. Keep your address and phone number posted near every phone in your house. Emergency situations can be very stressful, and some callers may momentarily forget this vital information or give incorrect information. By posting your location and call-back number, visitors at your home will also be able to dial 911 and get help quickly.
14. If you have an alarm system, be sure your contact numbers are up to date, and that the alarm company knows who to call when you are out of town.
15. Screen all phone calls with an answering machine, voice mail system or "Caller ID". An answering machine is inexpensive and allows you to hear who is leaving a message. If it is someone you know you can always pick up the phone before they hang up.

16. Inventory and mark your personal property. Do NOT mark your property with your Social Security Number. Ask your insurance agent if he has a booklet or form you can use to record your valuables. If you have a video camera, tape each room while providing a running commentary about the items you are recording. Deposit the tape in your lock box at the bank, or in a fire-proof safe in your home.

17. When you retire for the night, keep by your bedside a flashlight, your glasses, a cell phone and your house keys. The cell phone will enable you to call for help if the regular phone line has been cut. The keys can be tossed to police in the event you are trapped in an upstairs room. And the glasses and flashlight will enable you to move around in the darkness safely.

ALLOWING ACCESS TO YOUR HOME

1. Never let anyone in your house that you do not know. Keep a locked barrier between yourself and the person at your door until you are absolutely certain that they mean you no harm. This includes:

a "utility worker" or service person who simply appears without an appointment. Ask for photo ID, and call the service person's company to verify his identity BEFORE you allow him in your home. Legitimate service personnel or utility workers always carry a company identification card.

OR

anyone asking for a glass of water, or to use your restroom or phone. Direct them to the nearest public phone or tell them you will call for them. Direct them to the nearest public restroom or place where they can obtain water.

2. Don't allow someone to lure you out of your home to look at something outside. While you are distracted, a cohort may slip into your home.

3. Insist on photo I.D. before allowing a service person in your home. If they don't have I.D., make the person wait outside while you verify his identity by calling his employer.

4. If you do let someone in your house, such as a service person, restrict that person's access to only those areas where he/she needs to work. Lock off other portions of the house or stay with them so that you know where they are at all times.
5. Never let anyone know you are home alone, especially someone at your door.
6. Never confront an intruder. Try to get out of the house undetected. If you can't escape, lock yourself in a room (with a phone if possible).

WHEN YOU ARE NOT AT HOME

A burglar or thief will, on occasion, enter a home that is occupied; but they prefer to visit when you are not there. If you will be away from home for a few days, weeks or even overnight, the Home Safety Council recommends that before you leave, you do the following:

1. Purchase several light timers so you can set lights to come on in different rooms at different times during your absence.
2. Check outside lighting and replace burned out or dim light bulbs. Reposition security lights so they shine on key areas, such as doorways, garage doors, driveways, and around windows, including the backyard. If you don't have them, consider installing motion-detection lights around the perimeter of your home.
3. Do yard work before you leave. Trim limbs that could be used to access upper windows. Keep hedges neat and prune them so they can't be used by intruders for cover.
4. Give a spare house key to a close friend or relative so they can keep an eye on the inside and outside of your home.
5. If you plan to be gone for several days or more, arrange for someone to check your yard.
6. To make your home even more lived in, consider asking a trusted neighbor to use your driveway to park their car while you're away.

7. Arrange to have your newspaper delivery suspended and have mail held at the post office or picked up daily by someone you trust. Request a "mail hold" instead of a "vacation hold" with the postal service. "Vacation hold" says you are going to be away from home. "Postal hold" says you just want your mail held for a few days.
8. Arrange for someone to take your trash out on pick-up day and return the barrels afterward.
9. Consider purchasing a fire-proof home safe for important papers, etc. Or put valuable jewelry and paperwork in your bank safe deposit box while you're away.
10. Avoid unwittingly inviting crime. Be careful whom you tell about your travel plans. Record a generic greeting on your answering machine rather than one indicating that you are out of town. The safest message is one that only gives the phone number and that you are unavailable, not that you are gone. Example: "You have reached 555-0000. Please leave a message and we will call you back as soon as possible. Thank you!" Always use the word "we" and not "I". Make the caller think there is more than one person living here.
11. Before you drive away, double-check to be sure all doors and windows are locked and light timers are set. Make sure you've provided relatives or friends with your contact information so you can be reached in an emergency.

PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS

Have an evacuation plan in the event of a fire, tornado or other disaster; and make sure all occupants of the house know the plan. Rehearse the plan to insure that it will work and that everyone is certain of his/her role.

Have an emergency supply kit that is capable of sustaining all members of the household for three days. (See suggested supply list in the Appendix). Don't forget supplies for the family pet(s).

PROTECTING YOUR VEHICLE

The Seattle Police Department offers tips to reduce your risk of being a victim of a car prowler or theft.

- When you exit or enter your parked vehicle, stop and take a look around the area.
- Before leaving your parked car, always remove the keys, roll up the windows and lock the car.
- Make a habit of locking your garage door and car doors.
- If possible, store your car in a closed and locked garage.
- If your car is stored in a carport or parked near your house, leave your exterior lights on throughout the night.
- If you park on the street, choose a well-lit, open space even if it means adding additional street/yard lighting & trimming back trees/bushes that block your view of your vehicle.
- Consider replacing the light fixture closest to your car with a motion detector unit. Motion detectors are a good psychological deterrents since the normal assumption of a person seeing a light come on is that someone has seen them. Additionally, the light makes the prowler or thief more visible.

BE WARY OF IMPOSTERS WHO PRETEND TO BE UTILITY WORKERS

Xcel Energy warns its customers to be wary of persons attempting to gain entrance to your home by masquerading as employees or contractors of Xcel. Xcel wants you to know that:

1. All Xcel employees and most of the contractors that do work for them carry I.D. cards. To protect yourself, always ask for identification **BEFORE** you let anyone into your home. Xcel also advises that "if the person cannot show you an I.D., ask him or her to leave and return only with proper identification."

2. Another way to determine that an employee is with Xcel is to look for the truck. Most field workers arrive on site in vehicles with an easily

recognizable logo – either an Xcel Energy logo, or in the case of contractors, their company's logo.

3. Xcel employees typically ask to enter a home to investigate natural gas-related leaks or to check your appliances, but usually only after you have called them!

4. Occasionally Xcel employees may show up even though you did not call them. This usually happens when the gas in your neighborhood has been shut off and they need to re-light your gas appliances, or they need to check for gas leaks.

5. Xcel may ask to enter your yard for the following reasons:

- * To restore power after an electrical outage in your neighborhood.
- * To change out or restore a meter that is temporarily shut off.
- * To locate or dig for buried utilities.
- * To trim trees away from power lines that may run through your property.

All of these services are performed outside and should not require the service person to enter your home.

BEWARE DOOR-TO-DOOR CON GAMES

Door to door con artists travel in groups in pickup trucks, vans, or on foot during daylight hours. Frequently, they observe their victims prior to the actual encounter. Once they locate a victim, the con artists devise a plan and return. Con artists will strike when an opportunity arises. If they see a potential victim working in the front yard, they will enter the unlocked back door to commit a burglary.

Types of Con Games

"Utility Inspector" - These con artists impersonate employees of Public Service Company, the Water Department, US West (Quest), or other utilities. They gain entry to the victim's home by claiming to be working on a utility pole, gas line, or other problem in the neighborhood. Other con artists claim they need to check the furnace or water heater in the home, because they suspect the victim may have been over billed for services. Once

inside, they distract the victim while accomplices search for money, jewelry, etc.

"Home Improvement/Repair Frauds" - Itinerant workers known as "Travelers" offer bargain prices for home repairs. They typically claim to have done work in the past for the victim, or to have just finished a job and have leftover materials. After quoting a low price, Travelers intimidate their victims into paying much more after the work is completed. Common traveler frauds include roofing, asphalt paving, tree trimming, and painting.

"Neighbor Assistance Con" - Going door to door, this con artist convinces victims that a neighbor has an emergency and needs money. The needed funds may be for an emergency room fee, for gasoline, towing, etc.

"The Family Con" - A man, woman, and children appear at the victim's door and plead to use the victim's phone. They claim to have an emergency and must call for help. Or they may ask for a drink of water. Once inside, one offender distracts the victim, while another searches the house for valuables.

"Pigeon Drop" - One perpetrator approaches two supposed strangers and claims to have found a large sum of money. The victim believes the offender does not know either of them, but the other "stranger" is an accomplice. The con artist offers to share the windfall if convinced of the two stranger's goodwill. He asks each to contribute "earnest" money, which is placed in an envelope or handkerchief. The con artist switches the envelope with one containing cut-up paper.

"Bank Examiner" - A con artist pretends to be a bank examiner and calls the victim. He explains that a bank employee is suspected of altering withdrawal slips, and solicits the victim's help in trapping the "guilty" employee. The con artist convinces the victim to make a large withdrawal from his or her bank account to trap the bank employee. Instead, the offender takes the victim's money and disappears.
