



Home, Safe Home: Tips for Securing Your Home

Many real estate professionals have home offices. Whether you work at home or not, you might want to consider additional steps to secure your home. Burglars usually leave if they can't break in within ninety seconds. Anything that slows down a thief by even a minute or two can keep your house from being robbed.

- Make sure that all doors to the outside are metal or solid, 1 ¾" hardwood and have good, sturdy locks.
- Use the locks you have. Keep your doors and windows locked, even if you're at home. Get your children into this habit, too. And always lock up your home when you go out, even if it's only for a few minutes.
- Secure sliding glass doors with commercially available bars or locks, or put a wooden dowel or broomstick in the door track.
- Make sure your windows, especially at ground level, have good locks and use them.
- Make sure all porches and other possible entrances are well lit. Heat- or motion-sensing lights are a good choice for outdoor lights.
- Trim any bushes or trees that hide doors or windows. Keep ladders, tools, toys, and recreational equipment inside when you're not using them.
- Don't hand out keys to friends, even if they are trustworthy. Know the location of all your house keys all the time. Never use hide-a-keys or leave the key under the doormat, above the door, in a flowerpot, or anywhere outside the house. You may think you're being clever, but experienced thieves know all the tricks. Also, keep your car keys and house keys on a different ring if you ever use valet parking or leave your keys with parking lot attendants or even at a repair garage.
- Watch your trash: Just bought a new entertainment system? A bunch of empty boxes out by the curb triggers an alarm to would-be thieves. Instead of putting boxes out in plain sight, cut them down, and stuff them in trash bags.
- Keep written records of all furniture, jewelry and electronic products. If possible, keep these records in a safe deposit box, fireproof safe, or other secure place. Take pictures or a video, and keep purchase information and serial numbers if available. These help law enforcement agencies track recovered items.
- Clearly display your house number, so police and other emergency vehicles can find your home quickly.
- If you see a screen that has been cut, broken windows, or a door that's been left open, don't go in. Call the police from a neighbor's house or a public phone.
- If you hear a noise that sounds like someone breaking in or moving around, quietly call the police and wait calmly until they arrive. If you can leave safely, do so. Otherwise, lock yourself in a room you are in, pretend to be asleep.

(Sources: City of Baton Rouge, LA; www.homesecurityinformation.com)

Visit NAR's REALTOR® Safety Web site at www.REALTOR.org/Safety

This article is part of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, REALTOR® Safety Resources Kit.