

How to beat the burglar.

Burglars hit a house, apartment or condominium every 15 seconds. But if the burglar picks your place, instead of the one next door, you probably helped invite him there. He looks for what the police call "targets of opportunity", in other words, easy pickings.

To protect yourself, make your home look occupied when you're away. Chances are the thief will pass it up for an easier target. Also, make a reasonable investment in good locks, lights, and possibly an alarm system. It can pay off in security and peace of mind. Here are some specific measures you can take.

Look into a burglar alarm system. They vary in sophistication from a simple door alarm that makes noise, scares a thief and alerts the neighbors, to a silent alarm linked to an answering service. Check with a security company for the one that best fits your needs. Check the license and references of the company you choose.

Mark valuable items. Marking items a thief would be likely to steal, like the TV and stereo, will help police trace them and return them to you if they are recovered. Use an engraving pen. They're available at your Police Department Crime Prevention office or library. Use your driver's license number with state abbreviation.

Don't keep expensive jewelry at home. Keep it, along with other small valuables and important documents, in a safe deposit box.

Keep shrubbery trimmed. Thick, tall shrubbery provides cover for a burglar and lets him work undetected.

Have your lawn taken care of. Dry, uncut grass says you're away.

Be a good neighbor. If you see unfamiliar or suspicious activity, call the police. Call Crime Prevention to have a Neighborhood Watch program in your neighborhood. 277-4133.

Leave interior lights on. Use lamps that would be on if you were home, not necessarily one in a front window. They can decoy a burglar into thinking someone's inside. Use timers when you will be gone.

Light the outside of your house, too. Exterior lights are important, especially near doors and in the rear of the house, where thieves do most of their work.

Get automatic light timers. They turn lights on and off in different rooms at designated times.

Make an inventory. List valuable items, the date of purchase and original price. Save receipts and serial numbers if possible. Give a copy to your insurance agent; put another in your safe deposit box. If you have a loss, it will help establish proof of value for filing an insurance claim.

Secure patio doors, too. A dead-bolt type lock is recommended. Additionally, place 2 or 3 screws in the overhead track to reduce the chance of lifting the door out of the track.

Keep the garage door closed, locked. This helps protect any valuable property you store in the garage and prevents access to interior doors to the house. Electric doors should be disconnected when you will be gone for a long time. Consider padlocks on the garage door tracks.

Ask a neighbor to use your garbage cans. An empty garbage can is a tip-off that you're away.

Display "beware" signs. If you have a dog or an alarm system, put up signs that say you do. They deter thieves.

Leave a radio on. It says someone's home. If you have a volume adjustment on your telephone bell, turn it to the lowest level. A prowler will be less likely to hear an unanswered call. Unplug modular phones.

When you're away, park a car in your driveway. If you have a second car, leave it in the driveway, or ask a neighbor to park there. This not only gives the appearance of an occupied house, but prevents burglars from backing up a van for loading.

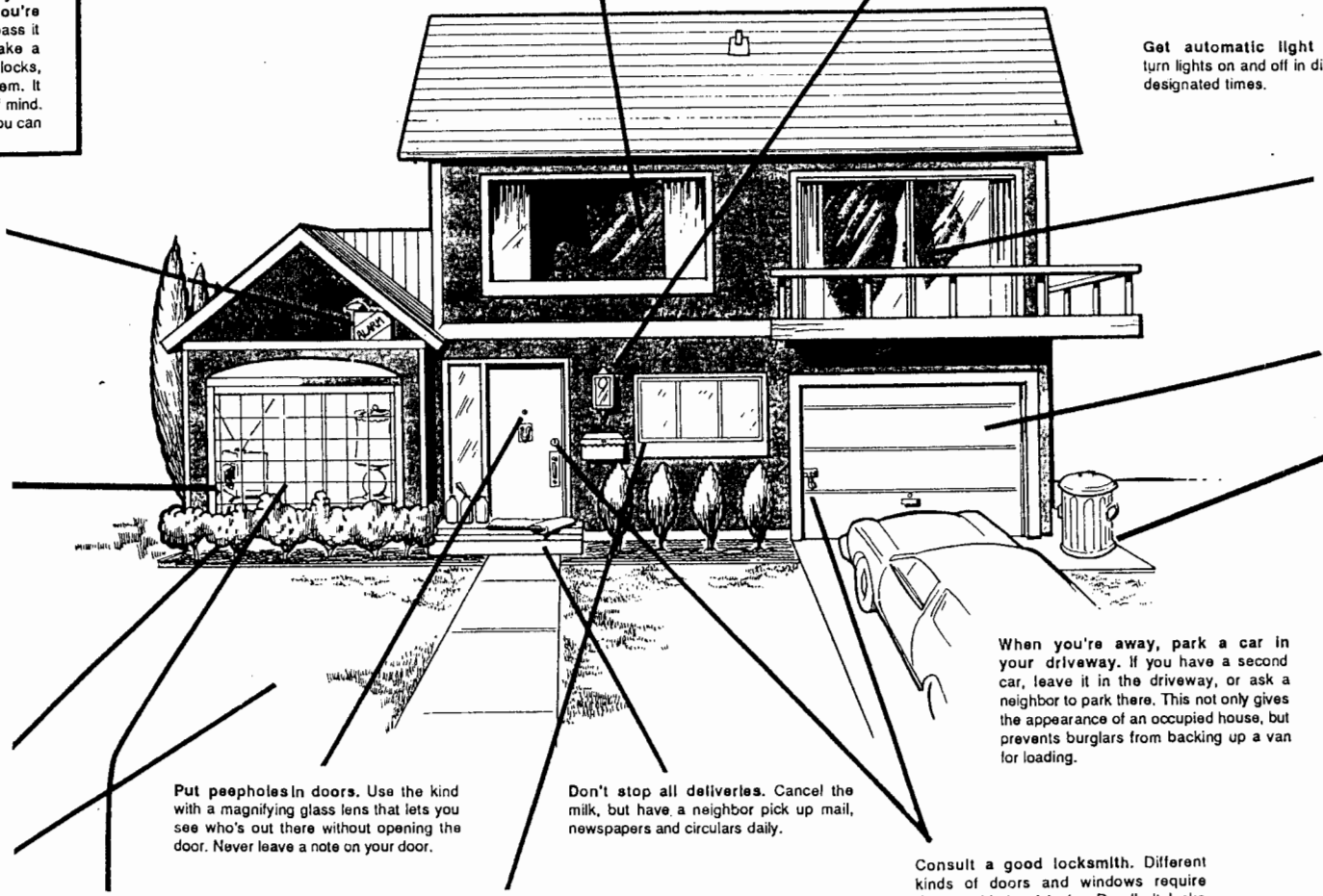
Consult a good locksmith. Different kinds of doors and windows require different kinds of locks. Deadbolt locks are recommended. Also, be sure to have locks changed after you move in.

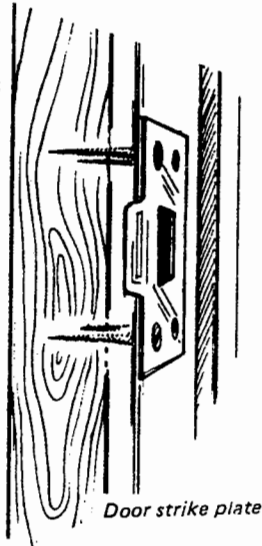
Display Neighborhood Watch signs at the front and rear of your house.

Display operation I.D. stickers at the front and rear of your house.

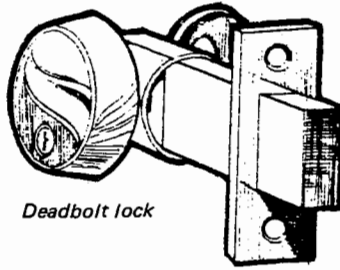
Put peepholes in doors. Use the kind with a magnifying glass lens that lets you see who's out there without opening the door. Never leave a note on your door.

Don't stop all deliveries. Cancel the milk, but have a neighbor pick up mail, newspapers and circulars daily.

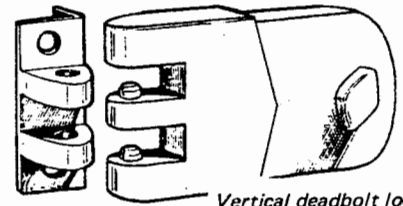




Door strike plate



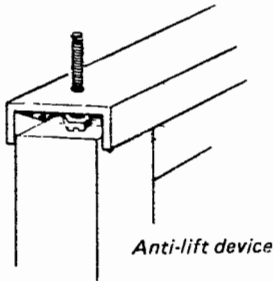
Deadbolt lock



Vertical deadbolt lock

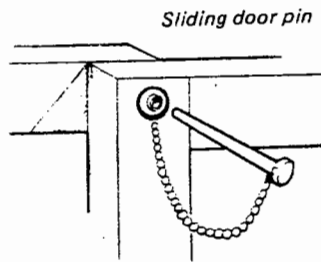
Dead Bolt Locks are required on all hinged doors that provide access from the exterior of the home. There are two varieties, single dead bolt and double dead bolt. The double deadbolt requires a key to unlock it from both sides. The strike plate for these locks should be secured with screws at least 3" long. Exterior doors should be metal or solid wood.

Vertical Dead Bolts are designed for use with double doors. Cost is determined by construction. Some are designed to replace existing key-in knob locks in both doors. Mortised dead bolt locks in the edge of the stationary door are recommended.



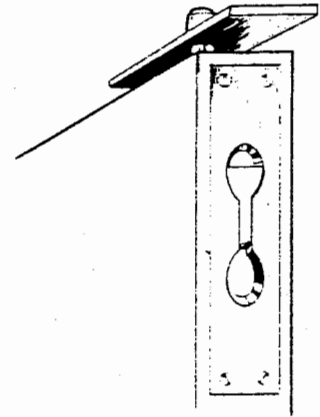
Anti-lift device

Anti-Lift Devices are available for sliding glass windows and doors. Sheet metal screws in the upper track will accomplish the same purpose.



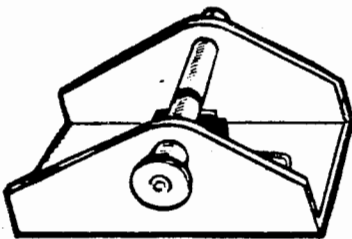
Sliding door pin

Lifting and Sliding can also be prevented by drilling a hole into the metal framework and inserting a pin or nail.



Mortised deadbolt lock

Double Doors can also be secured by placing an angle iron in the edge of the stationary door and the overhead framework or placing a deadbolt lock in the stationary door with the bolt facing upward into the overhead framework and downward into the threshold. Combine these two locks with a deadbolt lock in the moving door.



Sliding door lock

Garage Door Openers provide security when properly installed and used. Minimum security would consist of padlocks on both ends of a garage door. Garage doors can be protected inexpensively from the inside by cane bolts into the concrete floor or long bolts or metal rods through the door frame at both ends.

Anti-Slide Locks for windows and doors are available in countless varieties. Make sure the lock you choose is well-constructed. Locks for windows that have a downward sloping pointed bolt are recommended. Close the window securely and attach the lock as tightly as possible. There are also varieties of locks with bolts that go through the framework of a window or sliding door. Locks that are key-activated provide extra protection in that burglars cannot open sliding doors to carry out large items.

Sliding window lock

