

# Home Security Checklist

## Basic Risk Assessment

Is the security in your home sufficient to frustrate a potential thief or increase their chances of being caught? The Home Security Checklist was developed to give an indication of the level of security in your home. Complete the Home Security Checklist and learn how a little time, effort and money greatly improve your peace of mind in and around your home.

### EXTERIOR

- ❖ **Are there clear views of all windows and doors?** Yes No

The more private an area is, the more likely it is to attract the attention of a criminal. Trim trees and shrubs that block sight lines to your window and doors, particularly basement windows.

- ❖ **During the evening, is there visible interior or exterior lighting that gives the impression that you are home, even if you are not?** Yes No

Install outside lighting to eliminate dark areas around doors and windows. Use motion sensors lights with a low intensity feature as an alternative to bright constant level lighting.

### DOORS

- ❖ **Is there a convenient way of clearly seeing who is at your door without opening it?** Yes No

Every entrance door should have a convenient way of clearly seeing who is there without opening it. For most doors this will require the installation of a wide-angle lens peephole or door scope. This will allow you to keep your door locked while assessing the visitor prior to opening the door. Chain locks should not be used as a security device as they can easily be broken. If you have a screen door, by leaving it locked you could open the main door so that you could still converse with any person at your door while still maintain some security. A locked screen door also provides additional security to any door.

- ❖ **Do all of your exterior doors have a deadbolt with at least a one-inch throw?** Yes No

Criminals with tools easily defeat conventional key in the knob locks. Deadbolts should be installed on all exterior doors.

- ❖ **Are the screws that secure your entry doors and the strike plates located on the door jamb opposite the lock at least 2 ½ inches long?** Yes No

Door kick break-ins to homes are becoming common. Most door installations use screws less than 1" in length. This results in a door that appears secure but is relatively weak and easily prone to being kicked in. To secure a door properly the screws should be at least 2 ½ to 3 ½ inches long, and the strike plate should have a minimum of four offset holes.

- ❖ **Have you taken steps to reinforce any windows located in or next to doors?** Yes No

Glass within 40 inches of a door lock can be broken and a criminal can reach inside to unlock the door. The security of windows at the sides of doors can be improved by adding a polycarbonate panel (available at home improvement centers).

### SLIDING DOORS

- ❖ **If you have a sliding door, do you have screws in the top of the track to prevent the door from being lifted out when they are in the closed and locked position?** Yes No N/A

There is a 1" gap at the top of sliding doors, which allows them to be lifted in and out of their tracks. The addition of 3 flat-headed wood screws in the upper track of the doors in the closed position will prevent criminals from lifting them out.

- ❖ **If you have a sliding door, do you have either a thick wooden stick in the bottom track or a security bar to prevent the door from opening?** Yes No N/A

The standard locking pin on sliding door is usually cast metal, which is weak and easily broken. A snug fitting wooden stick or security bar should be added to the door to prevent it from being pried.

## WINDOWS

### SLIDING

- ❖ Do the sliding window of your home have a:
  - Pin (removable nail like object drilled through the overlapping vertical frame at a downward angle).
  - Piece of wood in the track beside and above the window frame (flat head wood screws can be substituted for the latter), or
  - Secondary aftermarket locking device? Yes No N/A

Most window locks are easily broken. Criminals target sliding windows because they are easy to jimmy open. To prevent quiet entry, add one or more of the security measures mentioned above. Be careful not to contact the glass if drilling through the window frame. Basement windows can also be protected using a piece of polycarbonate – a clear, rubberized plastic or bars. It is important that you can escape in the event of fire when using a barrier type countermeasure.

### DOUBLE HUNG

- ❖ Do the double hung (moves from up to down) windows of your home have a pin secondary aftermarket locking device? Yes No N/A

The pin should be drilled in a downward angle through the top of the bottom frame and the bottom of the top frame. Be careful not to contact the glass when drilling a window frame.

### CASEMENT /AWNING

- ❖ Give yourself a point if you have good quality casement/awning style windows with two latches per window.

## GARAGE DOORS

- ❖ Do you always close and lock your garage door? Yes No N/A

Thefts from garages are one of the most common yet easily prevented crimes. Keep garage doors closed and locked. Keep ladders in the garage.

## VALUABLES

- ❖ Do you limit your exposure to risk by storing valuables in the basement or keep them in a safety deposit box?  
Yes No

Criminals know all the hiding spots on the first and second floor. The best place to put valuables is in the safety deposit box. Otherwise good alternative is to hide valuables in a lock box in a general storage area of the basement. Criminals tend to spend a minimal amount of time there.

- ❖ Have you marked all your valuables with an engraver, and or taken pictures and stored them in a safe location?  
Yes No

Marked property is an effective deterrent against break and enters. Photographed items of value help with searching for items and assist with insurance replacement.

## NEIGHBORS

- ❖ Do you know your neighbors across the street and on all sides of you? Yes No
- ❖ Are you involved in Neighborhood Watch? Yes No

## RESULTS

To see how you did on the Home Security Challenge, please add up the number of "Yes" answers and divide by 20 less the number of "N/A" answers.

- 100% Excellent!
- 90+% You're almost there.
- 80+% You have a little work left to do.
- 70+% You home would benefit from further security improvements
- 60+% Its time to address your security needs.
- 50+% Improve your security. Don't delay.
- 0 -50% You home is vulnerable – take action.

Your results reflect the level of security your home has in relation to the most common security weaknesses. Please review your security as all of the above changes to your home can, in most cases, be done for less than \$100. The results are substantial for the amount of money invested in your home.