

Home is sweet when you feel safe.

We can all do a lot to make our homes safer. Every homeowner or renter can protect themselves from thieves, vandals, and home invasions. The first step is to get to know your neighbours, so you can watch out for each other. This works in every community, whether you live in a house or apartment. Next, do a safety check on your home. You can get a checklist of safety standards and tips by contacting your local police service. Record the serial numbers of your valuables, mark them with your driver's license number or name and keep a list of these items. Some safety changes are small home improvements. Others are just about paying attention.

We can all do a lot to make our homes safer. Every homeowner or renter can protect themselves from thieves, vandals, and home invasions. Follow the tips below to protect yourself and work to the common goal of preventing crime in your community.

AT HOME

- Get to know your neighbours – build connections so you can look out for each other.
- Doors should be visible from the street or by your neighbours. Cut down or take down anything making a hiding spot for criminals.
- Walkways and doorways should be well-lit.
- Protect your privacy and use curtains and blinds.
- Never answer a door without checking who's there. Be suspicious of unexpected visitors and ask for identification. If you are ever uncomfortable, do not open the door. Never let in a stranger. Being polite is not an issue – your safety is.
- Always verify the identity of door-to-door salespersons. If they are offering you a quote on some type of project, you are not obligated to immediately accept the quote.
- Plan for safety – take it into account when you plan renovations or home improvements.
- Never give your name, number, or address to a caller you don't know over the phone or an unknown visitor.
- Report threatening or harassing calls to the police.
- Talk to your phone company about their security and privacy features.

- Do a safety check on your home using the checklist of safety standards.
- Ask professional security companies or the staff at home renovation and building stores to walk you through security options.
- Record the serial numbers of your valuables, mark them with your driver's license number or name and keep a list of these items.
- Keep a list of all valuables, credit cards, and serial numbers in a safe place.
- Keep most cash in the bank.
- NEVER confront a suspected criminal or enter your home if you think you have a break-in. Call and wait for police at a safe place, like a neighbour's house or store.
- You can also join a community crime prevention program like Block Watch, Neighbourhood Watch, Citizens on Patrol, or Rural Crime Watch. Contact your local police service to see what crime watch program already exists in your community. If none exist, you may want to work with police to start one up.

FOR COMMUNITIES

- Recreational and open outdoor areas should be well-lit.
- Lot, street, and house design should foster community connection.
- Community resources and common spaces should be cared for – neglect invites crime.

- Partner with area schools to talk to young people about vandalism.
- Get to know where the kids in the neighbourhood live and who their parents are.
- Enhance community ties for overall neighbourhood safety.
- Consider starting a Citizens On Patrol (COP) or a crime watch group to be present in the community to notice and prevent criminal presence.
- Contact your local police service to participate in your local crime prevention initiatives.

FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

- Consider installing motion-activated lights on your property.
- Outdoor areas should not have blind spots and hiding places to give thieves cover.
- If vehicles are left outside, ensure there are no valuables in sight. **Roll up the windows, lock the doors and take the keys – everytime!**
- Garage door openers and vehicle insurance papers – keep them with you and out of sight at all times. Insurance papers have your address and thieves can use the garage opener to gain entry into your home.
- In rural areas, machinery such as ATVs, motorized farm equipment, snow machines, etc. are targets for thieves. Take the keys from the ignition everytime.

FOR RENTERS

- Make security a priority when you are looking for an apartment.
- If you have roommates, make good security habits part of your agreement.
- If you notice any unsafe parts in your home or building after going through the security checklist, ask your landlord or building manager to fix them.

FOR LANDLORDS AND DEVELOPERS

- Keep tenant safety in mind on all parts of your property.
- Consider installing motion-activated lights on your property.
- Outdoor areas should not have blind spots and hiding places to give thieves cover.

- Consider making Crime Prevention Week an annual reminder to do security inspections on your properties.
- Consider making changes to the physical environment to reduce the opportunity for a crime to occur. For tips on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, contact your local police service.

You may also want to check out our materials on personal security at www.crimeprevention.gov.ab.ca

HOME SECURITY CHECKLIST & STANDARDS

OUTSIDE

- Cut back plants and move debris that gives criminals hiding spaces and cover. Don't let plants cover windows.
- Residence number should be seen from the street, even at night.
- Entrances and walkways to house and garage should be well-lit.
- Bicycles, lawn mowers, BBQ, and ladders should be locked securely and out of sight.
- Install a lock on backyard gates.

DOORS

- Choose solid-core exterior doors (4.5 cm thick), with a 180 degree peephole and a security strike plate.
- Doorframes should be solid.
- Avoid locks that are easy to break or forced through (like the popular hole-in-the-knob lock). A 2.5 cm deadbolt lock is the minimum security you should have.
- Consider a security camera for the entrance.
- Install a storm door and keep it locked as an added preventative measure. You can still open the primary door yet see and talk to your visitor through the locked storm door.
- Avoid glass doors.
- Use non-removable door hinges.
- Door jambs are securely fastened and have strike plates secured to them with 6.35 cm screws.
- Deadbolts extend sufficiently into strike plate.

- Locks have been changed or re-keyed since you moved in.
- Sliding patio doors can be taken off their tracks. Install metal screws in upper track to prevent this point of entry by filling the space above the door. Patio doors can be pinned or have special locks installed.

PINNING

This is an easy safety technique for windows and sliding doors. Drill a 0.5cm hole through the inside frame into the outside frame and place a commercial pin or large nail through the hole. The point is to be able to prevent a window or door from being forced open easily from the outside.

WINDOWS AND GLASS DOORS

- If a window is within a meter of an exterior door lock (or in the basement), replace the glass with unbreakable clear plastic or coat it with a clear unbreakable coating.
- You can do the same for any other window that seems accessible from the outside.
- Install quality backup locks on all your windows. The latches that come with many windows aren't actually locks.
- Use pinning on all windows (even on double-hung and sliding aluminum windows). Please note that this can't be used on all windows, as attempting to drill holes in many window frame types will break the frame material or the glass itself.
- For windows that are on the ground floor or basement, install security bars. Check to make sure these don't violate any safety or building codes.
- Permanently secure windows you never use as long as they wouldn't be needed in case of an emergency exit. Remember that you need at least two potential exits from every room; this usually means that both a door and a window need to be operable.
- Make sure metal and basement windows have auxiliary locks.
- Make sure curtains or blinds cover windows completely.
- Window air conditioners should be secured from the inside.

GARAGE

- Make sure overhead and other doors close tightly and have quality locks.

- Keep doors locked and closed when not in use.
- Set and use safety features on remote garage door opener.
- Set up the lights so they can be turned on from inside your home.
- Use the same rules as you would for your house. Use the same standards for construction on doors and windows.
- Install inward swinging solid-core doors with deadbolts on your attached garage door.
- Use a good padlock and keep the garage locked, especially when you are away from home.

FIREARMS

- Store firearms and ammunition separately, ensuring both are locked away appropriately. Firearms and ammunition must be stored or displayed to meet the Firearms Act and regulations.
- If you own or plan to own firearms, the Canada Firearms Centre has information on licensing, registration, tipsheets, and fees. Call toll-free 1-800-731-4000 for more information or visit www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca

COMPUTERS, ELECTRONICS, AND OTHER VALUABLES

- Valuables should not be visible from the outside – this includes the 'glow' from computers and electronics.
- Record and register serial numbers.
- Use an engraver, permanent marker, or invisible ink pen to mark items.
- Look into devices for protecting your electronics and computer accessories.
- Record the serial numbers of your valuables if they have one and store the list in a safe place. If they don't, mark your valuables with your driver's license number or your name and add to the list.
- Small items and jewelry can be photographed beside a clearly marked ruler.
- Contents of the house can be videotaped and the tape stored in security box.

OTHER SECURITY OPTIONS

- Alarmed security systems.
- A good quality safe for jewelry, money, and other valuables.
- Roll-shutters for windows and doors.

HORSE AND LIVESTOCK OWNERS

- Identify your saddle and other tack.
- Western - stamp gullet area directly under horn.
- English – stamp inside of fender area.
- Mark on inside of each piece that can be taken apart. Metal stamping kits are available in hardware stores and work on leather too.

- More information and to report theft of livestock, contact your local police service.
- To participate in a rural crime watch program, contact the Alberta Provincial Rural Crime Watch Association at 780 422-0922 or visit www.ruralcrimewatch.ab.ca

You may also want to check out our materials on personal security www.crimeprevention.gov.ab.ca

WHAT DO WE HAVE IN COMMON?

Find out more on our common goal for safe homes at www.crimeprevention.gov.ab.ca