

Burglary Prevention

It's in your hands

- By adopting simple safety precautions around your home, you can considerably lower the risk of burglary.
- This pamphlet contains practical advice to enable you to protect your home against burglary.

Facts About...

Home Burglaries

- Many people are concerned about home burglary.
- Victoria's home burglary rate is consistently below the national average – but there are still over 40,000 burglaries in Victoria each year.
- Homes which have been burgled once are almost four times more likely to be burgled again – and burglars often return within two months, just after you've replaced all the items they stole.
- Most of us, especially those who live in cities, will become the victim of a burglary at least once in our lives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Protect your Home

Summary of useful tips

- ☑ Install strong locks on doors and windows – and lock up when you leave
- ☑ When you're not at home, make it look like somebody's there
- ☑ Never let people know when your home will be empty
- ☑ Avoid advertising your expensive purchases
- ☑ Don't hide spare keys outside your home
- ☑ Use "natural surveillance" to protect your home
- ☑ Mark your property
- ☑ Make a list of your property
- ☑ Lock up your tools and your shed
- ☑ Consider a dog, nature's natural burglar alarm
- ☑ Consider installing a burglar alarm
- ☑ Report all suspicious activity around your home to the police

CONTACTS

Police, Fire, Ambulance

▶ **000**

State Emergency Services (SES)

▶ **(03) 9684 6666**

Neighbourhood Watch

▶ **(03) 9247 5311**

Crime Prevention Victoria

▶ **www.crimeprevention.vic.gov.au**

HOME BURGLARY

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO AVOID IT



SIMPLE AND PRACTICAL ADVICE TO
HELP YOU PROTECT YOUR HOME

Useful Tips

INSTALL STRONG LOCKS ON DOORS AND WINDOWS – AND LOCK UP WHEN YOU LEAVE

In one-quarter of all burglaries there was no sign of forced entry – burglars just walked in!

- Burglars look for the easiest target – they want to get in and out quickly. Breaching a lock takes time, so locks deter burglars.
- Install deadlocks on all external doors and keyed locks on all windows; lock up when you leave, even if only for a few minutes. (But remember: don't engage the deadlocks while you're in the house – this may be hazardous in the event of a fire.)
- Security screens allow you to look out but prevent intruders from seeing in. A good quality screen door can put a locked barrier between you and a stranger.

WHEN YOU'RE NOT AT HOME, MAKE IT LOOK LIKE SOMEBODY'S THERE

Burglars seek out empty houses because there's less chance they'll get caught. Here's how to fool them:

- Leave a radio tuned to a talkback station.
- If you're out for the evening, leave some lights on and close the curtains.
- If you're going on holiday:
 - cancel your newspaper;
 - have a trusted neighbour or relative empty your letterbox and take your bin out (even if it's empty!) and in again;
 - hang some old clothes on the line;
 - leave old shoes outside the front door;
 - divert your home phone number to your mobile;
 - organise a house-sitter if you're away for an extended period of time.

NEVER LET PEOPLE KNOW WHEN YOUR HOME WILL BE EMPTY – DON'T LET BURGLARS "BOOK YOU IN"

- Avoid giving away information in person, in writing or through your answering machine message.
- Avoid leaving invitations or notes about holidays in plain view (stuck on the fridge, next to the phone, up on a whiteboard).

AVOID ADVERTISING YOUR EXPENSIVE PURCHASES

This advertises when your house will be empty. While most tradespeople are above board, a shady few might pass this information on to professional burglars.

- On your answering machine say "We can't come to the phone right now" rather than "I'm on holidays and will be back on...".
- If you live alone, say "We can't come to the phone right now" rather than "I can't come to the phone right now...".
- Boxes left on the nature strip let burglars know what's new in your house (DVD player, computer, etc). Cut boxes into pieces before recycling.

DON'T LET BURGLARS USE YOUR SPARE KEY

- No matter how good a hiding place it seems, burglars will always look for hidden keys – so leave keys with a trusted neighbour or friend instead.

USE "NATURAL SURVEILLANCE" TO PROTECT YOUR HOME – DON'T GIVE BURGLARS SOMEWHERE TO HIDE

Burglars don't want to be caught in the act.

- A low fence or one which can be seen through lets your neighbours spot something that's out of place, like a stranger in your garden. (A high fence that can't be seen through seems like good protection – but once the burglar is behind that, they're hidden from view.)
- Keep trees and shrubs trimmed low.
- Motion-activated lighting puts a spotlight on burglars. If they think they've been spotted, they'll bolt.

MARK YOUR PROPERTY

- Marked property is much harder for burglars to re-sell – and even if a burglar steals a marked item, it's much easier for you to identify what's yours.

MAKE A LIST OF YOUR PROPERTY

- Mark your property using an engraving pen (available from selected hardware stores) or ultra-violet markers (available through Victoria Police Gift Shop (☎9247 5275) and your local Neighbourhood Watch).
- Put this code on your property: "V" (for Victoria) followed by your licence number.
- Keep a list of your CDs, DVDs, videos and any other collectible items in a safe place (a list on your computer is no good if the burglars steal that too!).
- Take photos of expensive items, such as jewellery.
- Fill in a "Property Inventory Form" (available through Neighbourhood Watch) to help police return your property to you.
- Make sure you have current and adequate insurance cover.

LOCK UP YOUR TOOLS AND YOUR SHED

There have been increased reports of property being stolen from gardens and sheds. Don't let a burglar steal your tools or use them to break into your own house!

- Always put away your tools and lock your shed.

CONSIDER GETTING A FOUR-LEGGED "BURGLAR ALARM"

- Barking dogs warn people that something's wrong, so burglars avoid homes with dogs.
- If you don't own a dog, a "beware of dog" sign may still deter a burglar.

CONSIDER INSTALLING A BURGLAR ALARM

The alarm systems that are most likely to deter a burglar are those which:

- are highly visible (eg, metal box on the front of the house);
- emit a loud noise when activated; and
- transmit an immediate signal to a security service.

BE OBSERVANT. REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY TO THE POLICE (000).