

City of Virginia Beach
"A Certified Crime Prevention Community"



HOME SECURITY

A Guide for
Protecting Your
Home and Property



PD 306 Rev 11/10

Prepared in the public interest by the Virginia Beach Police Department

www.VBgov.com/dept/police/

From the Chief of Police



DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

City of Virginia Beach

MUNICIPAL CENTER
VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA 23456-9064

Dear Citizen,

The Virginia Beach Police Department needs your support in reducing the number of burglaries, larcenies and other crimes in our City.

The principle aim of a citizen/police crime prevention program is to deter, detect and apprehend criminals within the City of Virginia Beach. Citizens must be willing to support and assist each other in protection of their property.

It is our sincere hope that, by coordinating the efforts of individual home owners and business persons with the expertise of the personnel of the Police Department, the objectives of this program will be achieved.

This booklet is provided for your convenience, and we hope it will enable you to assess the security, or otherwise, of your home and businesses and, where necessary, take steps to ensure maximum safeguards.

For additional information or assistance, call the Crime Prevention Unit at 385-1006. To report any emergency, call 911.

James A. Cervera

James A. Cervera
Chief of Police

YOUR
NEIGHBORHOOD

It has been shown that in neighborhoods where citizens have joined together to look out for each other's safety, the incidence of burglaries and other crimes has been significantly reduced. Knowing who your neighbors are is the first step in this program. The next step is to begin Neighborhood Watch in your community

TO BE A PART OF NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Join with your neighbors in volunteering your eyes and ears to watch your neighborhood and report anything suspicious to the Virginia Beach Police Department. Thieves and vandals will go elsewhere when a Neighborhood Watch Community is on its toes. Contact the Crime Prevention Office for assistance in organizing a Neighborhood Watch Program in your area.



YOUR HOME

FREE HOME SECURITY ASSESSMENT

A Virginia Beach Police Officer can inspect the locks, doors and windows of your home with you. Exterior lighting, landscaping and other factors affecting the protection of your home from burglary also will be reviewed. The officer will make recommendations for improving your home security. You can arrange for a free assessment by calling the Crime Prevention Office.

Crime Prevention -	2441 Princess Anne Rd	385-1006
1st Precinct -	2509 Princess Anne Rd	385-4377
2nd Precinct -	820 Virginia Beach Blvd.	385-2700
3rd Precinct -	926 Independence Blvd.	385-2703
4th Precinct -	840 Kempsville Road	385-2800

You can also print out a home security assessment survey from our web site at VBgov.com.

SAFETY TIP:

*When upgrading your home security, **DON'T FORGET YOUR HOME FIRE SAFETY PROGRAM!** Equip your home with fire detection equipment, fire extinguishers, and practice a family escape plan. For more information call the Virginia Beach Fire Inspection Division.*

DEFINITION OF CRIME PREVENTION

The anticipation, recognition and appraisal of a crime risk and the initiation of some action to remove or reduce it.

REDUCE THE OPPORTUNITY

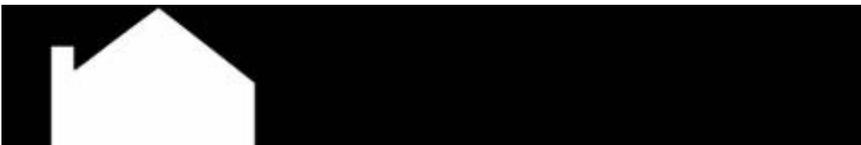
When assessing a property for safety and security, four major areas are addressed. They are natural surveillance, natural access control, territorial behavior and maintenance. When all four of these are incorporated, criminal opportunity is reduced.

Natural Surveillance: Most criminals do not want to be observed while committing crimes. We need to create environments where there is plenty of opportunity for people engaged in their normal behavior to observe the space around them. Areas can be designed or changed so they are more easily observed by you and others.

Natural Access Control: Most undesirables will try to find a way into an area through which they will not be easily observed. Limiting access and increasing natural surveillance helps to keep potential criminals off the property and marks abnormal users of the space as intruders.

Territorial Behavior: Designing an environment which clearly delineates our private space does two things. First, it creates a sense of ownership which fosters behavior that challenges abuse of that space or unwanted acts in that space. Second, a sense of my space creates an environment where strangers or intruders stand out and are more easily identified.

Maintenance: Care and maintenance allows for the continued use of a space for its intended purpose. Deterioration and blight indicate less concern and control by the intended users of a site and indicate a greater tolerance of disorder.



SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

Successful efforts to combat crime require the cooperative involvement of police and citizens. The police cannot be everywhere. Successful deterrence depends on citizen cooperation and involvement. Many crimes would never be committed if more citizens were alert to suspicious activity in their neighborhood or if they acted on what they saw. Don't dwell on your possible embarrassment if your call should prove to be unfounded. Think instead of what could have happened if you had not called.

WHAT INFORMATION DO THE POLICE NEED

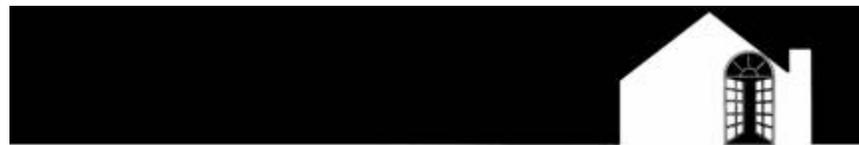
To report suspicious activity, use the non-emergency number, 385-5000. For events that are life-threatening or immediately damaging to property, call 911.

You will be asked for your name, address and phone number, in case additional contact with you is necessary. You do not have to provide this information if you do not want to. Any information provided to the police department is kept in confidence. If you do not want personal contact with the responding officer, say so.

The most important information needed by the police is:

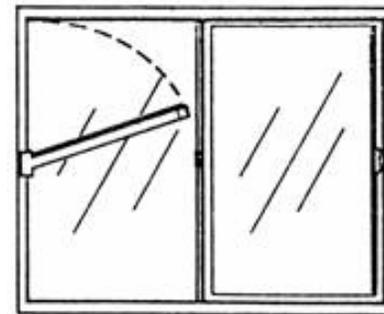
- What happened
- When
- Where
- If anyone is hurt
- License numbers and descriptions of any vehicles
- Direction of travel
- Description(s) of suspect(s)
- If there are weapons involved

By acting quickly and calmly, your request for police service could foil a crime, help to identify suspects involved in other crimes or deter a criminal act by letting potential suspects know that you and your neighbors are alert to suspicious activity, suspicious vehicles and suspicious persons.



SLIDING WINDOWS

Sliding windows should be secured by the same methods used for sliding doors. Both the pan head top screws and the bracing devices (metal rod, wooden dowel or steel pins) are effective on this type of window, if the slider is on the inside. Several types of auxiliary locks, which offer the best security, are available for installation.



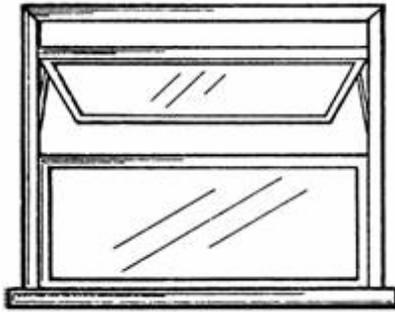
SAFETY TIP:

In the event of fire or other emergency, bedroom windows should provide a means of ready escape. Any window lock needing a key or tool to unlock it, such as the screw-in devices now on the market, should not be used due to fire hazard.

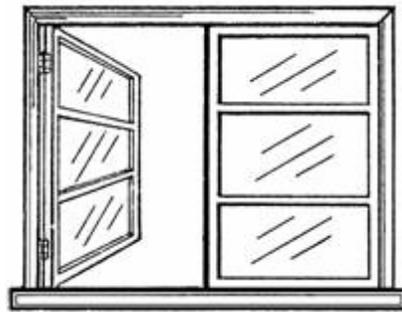


CASEMENT WINDOWS (CRANK TYPE)

Casement windows are easy to secure. Make sure that the latches operate properly and that there is no excess play in the crank handle. One measure of security is to remove the handle so that if someone does break the glass, there is no mechanism to open the window. Replace any worn hardware.



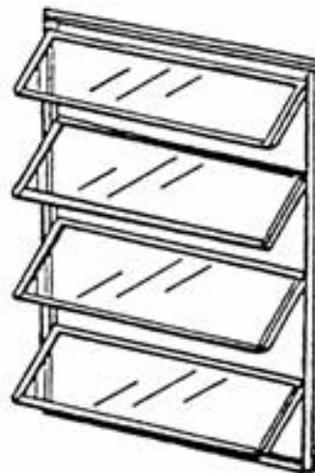
AWNING (LOUVERED) TYPE



OUTSWING TYPE

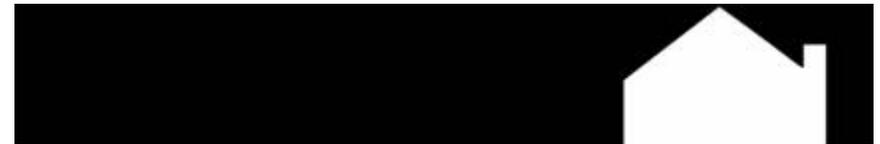
LOUVERED WINDOWS

Louvered windows are security risks. Remove and replace them with solid glass or cover the opening with a polycarbonate material 3/16" thick. Panels can be epoxyed to their frames.



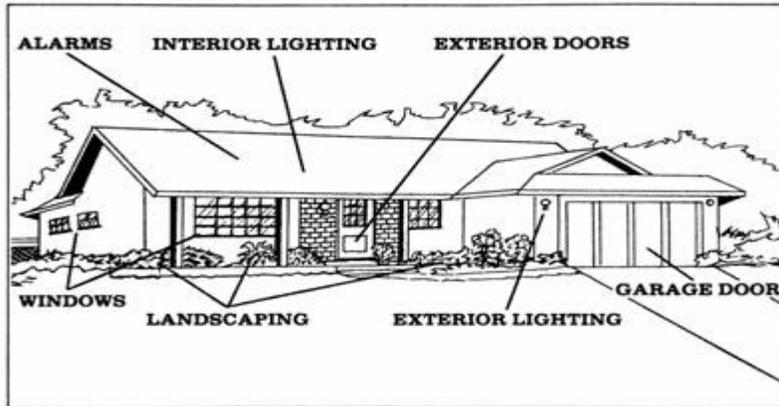
WHAT IS SUSPICIOUS

- A stranger entering your neighbor's home while your neighbor is away or trying to open a neighbor's door. Remember, burglaries often occur in broad daylight, when they should be most obvious.
- Someone carrying property such as TV's, radios, stereos, etc., at an unusually late hour or in an unusual place.
- The sound of shattering glass could signal a possible burglary, vandalism or larceny in progress.
- Anyone peering into vehicles while walking down a street or someone removing tags, gasoline or parts from a car. Someone attempting to enter a car using a coat hanger or other device. Never assume that it is the owner who has locked his keys in the car. Be suspicious of anyone tampering with the hood or trunk of a car.
- An improperly parked car or an abandoned vehicle, or someone leaving one car and driving away in another. These may be signs of a stolen vehicle.
- Persons loitering around schools, parks, and isolated areas, or in the neighborhood. Loiterers could be possible sex offenders or burglars.
- Business transactions conducted from a vehicle, especially around schools, playgrounds or parks and often involving juveniles, or a steady flow of strangers to and from a particular house on a regular basis at unusual times or late hours. This could indicate the sale of drugs or stolen property.
- Offers of goods or repair work at unusually low prices could indicate stolen property or some type of fraud.
- Door-to-door solicitors without properly issued licenses. They could be vending illegally or casing houses in your neighborhood.
- All fights, screams and loud noises (such as explosions) should be reported, as possible crimes or life-threatening events could be occurring.



YOUR HOME

AREAS OF CONCERN



APPEARANCE OF OCCUPANCY

Maintaining an appearance of occupancy, even when your residence is vacant, is essential to discouraging burglary attempts. Timers which automatically regulate the interior lighting of a home can create such a deception. Timers should be used while on vacation, when you are out to dinner or even during the day while you are at work.

One type of automatic timer has a 24-hour dial and allows you to set an on-and-off time to coincide with normal light usage in your home. These timers simply plug into the wall, and the lamp you want to use is plugged into the timer.

For the most realistic deception, several timers and lamps should be used to simulate occupancy. For instance, a radio and lamp in the living room might be on from 6:30 p.m. until 11:00 p.m.; a lamp in the bedroom until 11:30 p.m.; then a bedroom lamp would be on until midnight. This would indicate to anyone watching the house that it was occupied and the residents were going to bed.

During the day, leave drapes and shades in their normal position - the way you have them when at home. Do not leave easily movable valuables in sight close to windows.

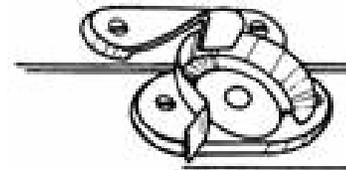
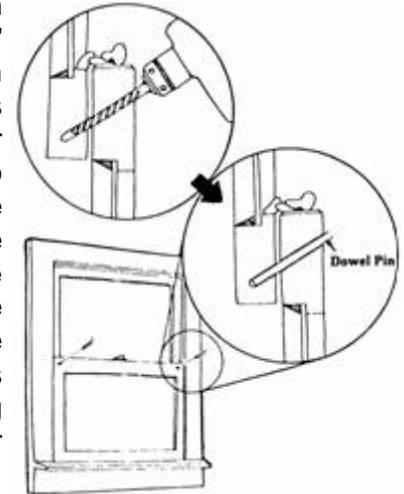
WINDOWS

WINDOW SECURITY

Windows, like doors, provide an opportunity for unwelcome entry. There are many different kinds of windows and a variety of security devices. All ground floor windows as well as those easily reached from the roof, porch, etc. should be secured.

DOUBLE HUNG SASH-TYPE WINDOWS

To secure wooden double hung windows, drill a hole that angles slightly downward through a top corner of the bottom window into the bottom of the top window, on both sides. Insert two 5/16" diameter dowel pins, one on each side of the window. The pins should fit loosely enough in their holes so that they are easy to insert and remove. A separate set of holes can be drilled into the outside sash approximately three to four inches above the inside sash so that the window can be left open for ventilation. This prevents the window from being opened further than the three or four inches allowed.

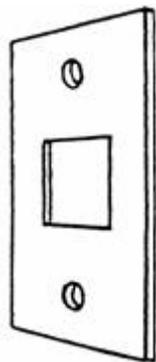


The crescent latch found on double hung windows is not a security device. Its function is to keep the upper and lower windows together. A keyed crescent latch is not to be considered a security device either.



STRIKE PLATES

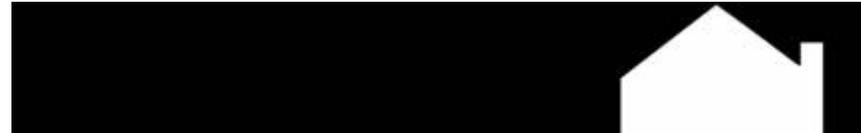
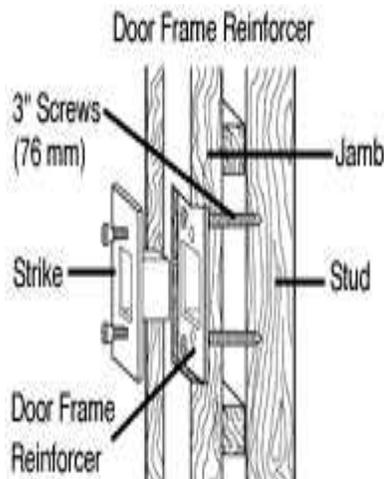
The weakest point of a good lock may be the strike plate, which secures the bolt when the door is locked. Because of the way a door frame is constructed, the strike plate must be reinforced. The door frame is set into an opening at the time of construction, and after the frame is squared, there is air space between the door frame and the door buck (the 2x4 next to the opening for the door). To increase security, the air space between the door frame and door buck must be bridged so that the locking system is secured to a structural member, not to the trim.



Thin gauge metal strike plates should be replaced with heavy duty strike plates secured with number 12 three inch wood screws. This adds protection to the jamb and is relatively inexpensive. If the frame appears weak, further security can be added by installing a long, high security strike plate or a high security strike box. These should also be secured with number 12 three inch wood screws.

For doors installed next to masonry walls where there is not a door buck, lead anchors must be placed in the wall and the strike plate attached to the lead anchors.

With the addition of the reinforced strike plate, the door jamb is not likely to split when the door is kicked.



LANDSCAPING

Keep doorways, windows, porches, driveways and walkways clear when planting bushes and flowers. Remember, the landscaping and fences which provide you with privacy also give a burglar a place to hide. Keep shrubbery trimmed low and raise tree canopies so doors and windows are visible to neighbors and from the street. If you have a second floor, prune trees so a thief cannot climb in a second floor window. Locked gates and well-maintained fences can increase the difficulty of entry and deter the removal or large items.

A well-maintained lawn and property is a very effective clue that someone is at home and cares. Plan your landscaping with both privacy and security in mind.

EXTERIOR LIGHTING

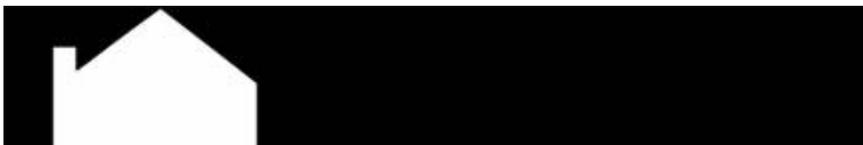
Exterior lighting is extremely important in residential security. Each exterior doorway should be lighted to prevent a burglar from concealing his activities. Yards and windows should be lighted to prevent concealment. Ornamental porch and yard post lamps are a means of eliminating night blind spots.

Yard and doorway lights can be equipped with sensors which will turn the lights on either from "dusk-to-dawn" or when sensing motion.

HOUSE NUMBERS

Make sure that police, fire and paramedics can find your home in a time of emergency. Have your house numbers clearly mounted on a high contrast background and illuminated ALL night. Your house number should also be displayed on the back of your home if you have an alley or your garage is at the rear of the residence.

You cannot make a residence absolutely burglar-proof, but you can make entry so difficult that the burglar will go elsewhere in search of an easier target.



ALARM SYSTEMS

Many citizens wish to increase their protection by adding an alarm system. While the Virginia Beach Police Department cannot recommend specific companies that sell or lease alarms, the following tips will help you in determining what type of alarm will best meet your needs for your home or business.

If an alarm system is determined to be needed, follow these steps to help assure you of obtaining a quality intrusion detection system. Consult several reputable alarm companies and obtain detailed written proposals from them. Make sure the proposal indicates the exact type of coverage to be provided, the type of equipment to be utilized, the warranty for the installation and equipment, and all costs involved including installation and maintenance fees. Ask if the monitoring center is local or out of state. Other considerations are back-up power if the home's power supply is out, and transmission of a silent alarm over the telephone wires if the phone service is out of service. Ask for referrals of other customers in your area that have had systems installed like the one being proposed to you. Check your contract and carefully review what you sign.

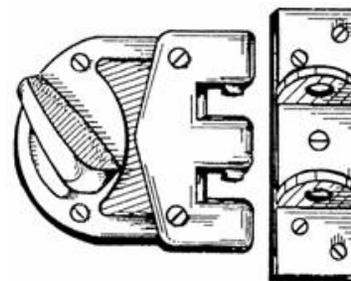
Some systems are designed to just ring a bell and/or illuminate the area to scare off an intruder. When a sensory device fastened to a door or window detects an intruder, these local systems send a signal directly to a sounding device located outside your home, or to your house lights. It is hoped that the sound or lights will alert the homeowner (if at home), or a neighbor or passerby, and scare the intruder from the premises.

Any time your alarm sounds, the situation should be treated as if someone is in your home. When the alarm is activated, an intruder in your house can panic and possibly cause you bodily injury if you get between him and his escape route. If possible, lock yourself in a room and call the police. If you are outside, do not enter your home, but go to a neighbor or nearby phone and call the police.



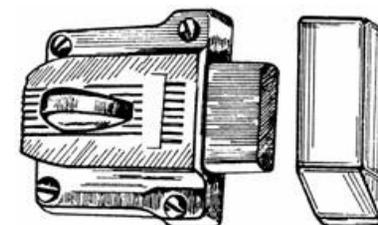
RIM MOUNTED LOCKS

Surface mounted or rim mounted deadbolts, both vertical and horizontal bolts, also provide good security. They mount on the surface of the door and are easy to install. This type of lock is less expensive than single or double cylinder mortised locks.



VERTICAL DEADBOLT

HORIZONTAL DEADBOLT



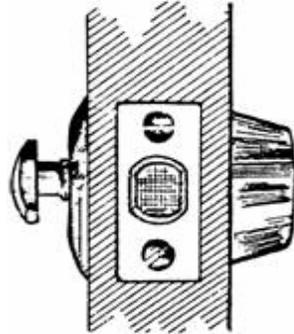
SAFETY TIP:

In case of fire or other emergency which would require quick evacuation from the home, everyone in the family should know how to unlock any door in the home. If any lock requires a key to unlock it, the key should always remain at a designated place so that everyone in the family knows its location, it is accessible by everyone, and everyone staying in the home has practiced using the key.



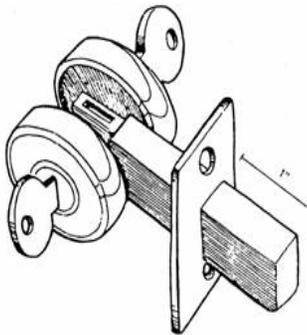
SINGLE CYLINDER TUBULAR DEADBOLT

The single cylinder deadbolt lock is key operated from the outside only. The interior operation is a thumb turn. If used where there is glass within 40" of the lock, additional security measures should be taken.



DOUBLE CYLINDER DEADBOLT

The double cylinder deadbolt lock is key operated on both sides.



This lock is no longer recommended as a Crime Prevention measure due to the chance of persons being trapped in case of fire. If you already have such a lock and it is impractical to replace it, then it is suggested that a key be left in the interior side.

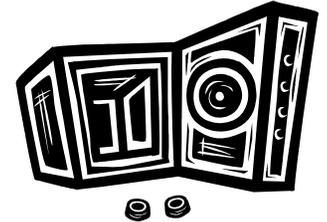


DO NOT DEPEND ONLY ON AN ALARM TO PROTECT YOU - BE SURE TO USE THE PROPER LOCKING DEVICES.

In 2008, the City of Virginia Beach updated its alarm Ordinances. All third-party monitored alarm system users need to obtain an alarm Permit/Registration. There is a one time fee for registering your alarm. The cost of registration is \$10. Alarm users are allowed to have two false alarms per year. After the first two false alarms, fines will be imposed. The alarm registration form and additional information is available on vb.gov.com. If you have additional questions, contact the False Alarm Reduction Unit line at 385-1739 or FAU@VBgov.com.

SAFES

There are two basic types of safes: the money safe which is burglar resistant and the records safe which is fire resistant. The key to deciding what meets your needs is to determine what you are trying to protect against. Some new safes combine the features of both types of protection.



If you find that your safe offers inadequate protection or is obsolete, check to see if your insurance company gives a reduction in premiums for using an appropriate safe. This may offset part of the cost of a new safe.

Anchor or bolt your safe to the floor or wall stud to prevent it from being carried away. If it is a large safe, remove the wheels or casters.



PROPERTY INVENTORY LIST

Keep an inventory of your personal property in a safe place. It could be a list, photographs, or a videotape. The more complete your inventory, the better. This may help you recover stolen property in the event of a theft, or help you establish a loss with your insurance company in case of fire, flood, etc.

Include the manufacturer model and serial numbers, size, color, and any damage to the item. If you mark your property with a personal number, use a special number or code that you will remember easily. It is not recommended that you use your social security number. Start your personal number with the two letter abbreviation of your state. An example is "VA123ABC".

SAFETY TIPS AT HOME

- If you are bothered by obscene or threatening phone calls, hang up immediately and call the police non-emergency number to report it. Never give your name, address, credit card or social security number to an unknown caller. Do not leave your name or address on your answering machine.
- Get to know your neighbors. They are your single best means of safety and security when it comes to looking out for your property.
- Do not let strangers in to use your telephone. Have them wait outside and make the call for them.
- If you think your home may have been burglarized, go to a safe place and call the police.
- Tear up or shred all "pre-approved" credit card offers and convenience checks, before throwing them away. Thieves can retrieve these documents and open credit accounts with new addresses.
- Keep a list or photocopy of all credit cards, along with expiration dates and phone numbers to call in case of theft. Store the list in a secure location.



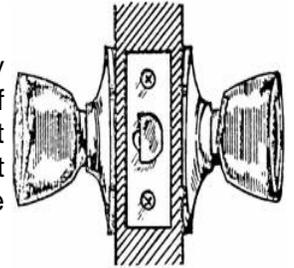
DOOR SYSTEM SECURITY

Each of the components of the door system requires individual consideration with respect to security. In addition to the door itself and the hinges, these components include the lock on the door, the door frame, and the strike plate on the frame.

KEY-IN-THE-KNOB

The majority of all doors are equipped with a standard key-in-the-knob latch, which provides little or no security. Note the term "latch", not "lock". These devices have a spring which holds a latch in place. These latches can be defeated by using credit cards to slip the spring latch, kicking the door, or spreading the frame.

Some manufacturers add security features such as anti-shim devices. If properly installed, this may prevent slipping the bolt with a card, however it can still be wrenched or the jamb can be spread.

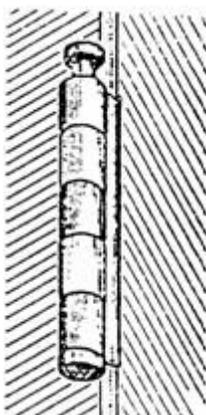


All exterior swinging doors should be equipped with a single cylinder deadbolt lock. Standard features to look for in a good lock are:

- Minimum 1" bolt throw (the portion of the lock which extends from the door into the door frame).
- Free spinning beveled cylinder guards constructed of case hardened steel.
- 1/4" case hardened bolts which hold the two cylinder halves together.
- A pin tumbler mechanism which incorporates a minimum of five pins.

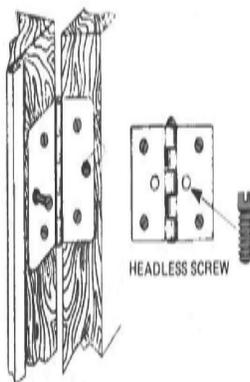


DOOR HINGES



EXPOSED HINGES

Doors which open outward have exposed hinges. These doors can be unhinged by removing the pins and then lifting the door away from the frame. There are hinges which have non-removable pins or hinges containing set screws to prevent pin removal. The existing hinges may be protected by removing two screws opposite each other from both leaves of the hinge. Insert a screw, nail or wooden dowel into the door frame side of the hinge, protruding 1/2". Drill out the opposing screw hole in the door. Do this to the top and bottom hinge of the door. When the door is closed the hinge pins may be removed, but the door will remain firmly in place.



DOOR VIEWER

Know who is at the door before you open it. If there is no window in or near the door, consider installing a wide-angle viewer in the door. The viewer should provide a wide-angle field of vision.

WHILE YOU ARE AWAY OR ON VACATION

- Do not hide a key outside your home. Leave that extra key with a trusted neighbor or friend.
- Never leave your home unlocked, even for a brief trip to the store or a visit to a neighbor. Many homes have been burglarized in such short periods of time.
- Do not put a name or address tag on your house or car keys. That is an open invitation to an unwelcome visitor should you ever lose your keys.
- Let your neighbor know you are going to be away and where you can be reached.
- Ask a neighbor to pick up your mail, packages and newspapers.
- Have someone mow your lawn in the summer or shovel your walk in the winter.
- Ask your neighbor to use your trash cans or set their cans in front of your curb on trash collection day.
- Invite your neighbor to park a car in your driveway.
- Make your home look as if you are there. Set automatic timers on your lights. Consider plugging a radio into a timer, set to an all-talk station with the volume on low.
- Consider turning off the ringers on your phone.
- If you have a garage door with an electric opener, unplug the opener and also make sure that you lock the door. Also lock the door leading from the garage into the interior of your home.
- If you travel with valuables, put them in the hotel safe.
- Keep your car doors locked and suitcases out of sight.
- If you think you're being followed, don't go home! Go to a police or fire station, or an open business.
- Park your car in well lighted areas. Lock the doors and take the keys with you. Do not leave valuables in your car in plain view.
- If you see an accident, don't stop; instead, use your cell phone or a well-lit pay phone to call for help.



TYPES OF EXTERIOR DOORS

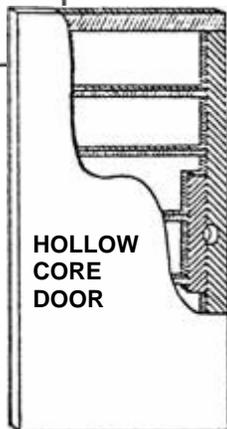
METAL OR STEEL DOOR

A well constructed steel door is probably the homeowner's best protection against forced entry; however, all steel doors are not constructed the same. Some are constructed with a heavier gauge sheet metal, while others are thinner and can be peeled apart like a tin can. It is recommended that the sheet metal in the construction of a metal door be no thinner than 18 gauge. Horizontal and vertical stiffeners within the door add strength to the door. The steel door should be reinforced at the lock and door knob assembly, usually done with plates within the door.



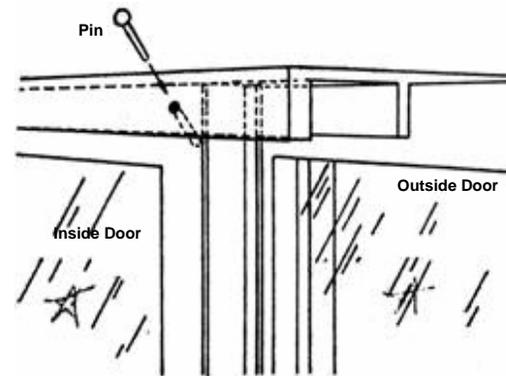
SOLID CORE WOOD DOOR

The solid core wood door has a solid interior of wood covered by wooden panels. This type of door does not cost as much as the steel door and does offer the homeowner protection against an intruder when properly installed with good security hardware.



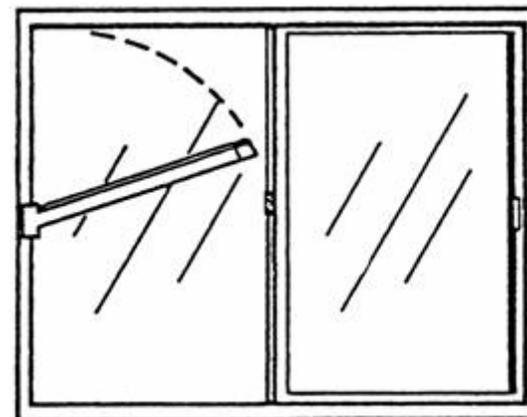
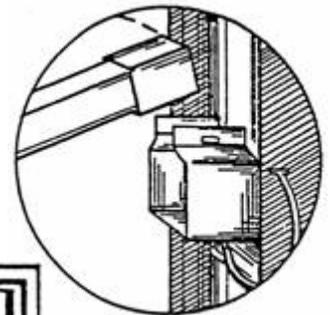
HOLLOW CORE DOOR

The hollow core door is constructed of thin wood covering a wood frame. It has a hollow center or a center filled with foam or cardboard material. This type of door offers the least resistance against an attack. The intruder can kick the door apart or peel the facing off the door to enter the premises. This door is intended as an interior door only.



Another method is to drill a hole, angled slightly downward, through the face of the top track, through the top of the inside door and into, but not through, the outside door. A nail or bolt can be slipped into this hole which will secure both parts of the door to the upper track.

A variety of sliding door and window locks are available. Some require keys while others do not. Keyed locks provide superior protection for sliding glass doors and windows because a burglar must break out a large glass area to gain entry or exit through a key-locked sliding door or window. (See *Safety Tip*.)

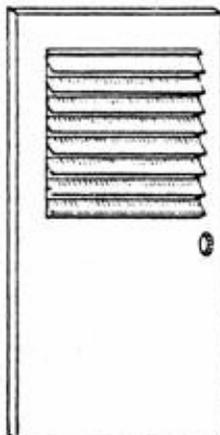


**Charlie Bar
(or similar device)**



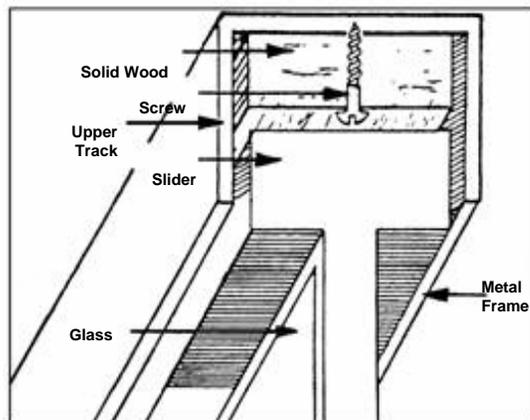
LOUVERED GLASS DOOR

The louvered glass door provides little resistance against an intruder. Glass panels can be broken or pulled out. The glass area should be covered with security bars, grillwork or a polycarbonate at least 3/16" thick. Glass panels can also be epoxied to their frames to prohibit removal. Lock mechanisms are the same as those used on any doors with glass. (See section on locks.)



SLIDING GLASS DOORS (OR WINDOWS)

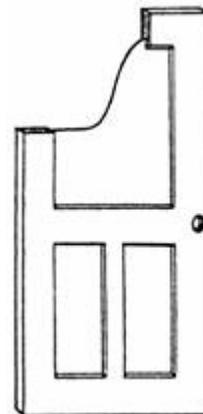
Sliding glass doors present a major security problem if they do not have the proper locks and if special steps are not taken to prevent removal of the door. A sliding glass door is lifted into position when installed and therefore can be lifted from the track to be removed. To prevent this (if your door slides on the inside), it is recommended that 1 1/4" pan head (large head) sheet metal screws be inserted into the top of the door frame at both ends and the middle. These screws should be adjusted so that the door barely clears them when it is operated.



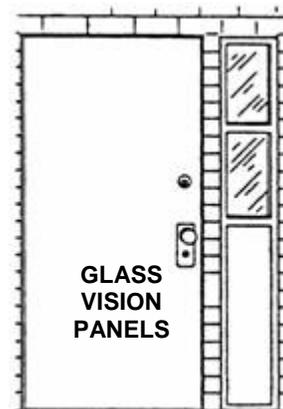
WOOD PANEL DOOR

The basic weakness of the wood panel door is in the panels themselves. They usually can be kicked out by the intruder or broken out with a hammer or other blunt tool.

***HOLLOW CORE AND WOOD PANEL DOORS SHOULD BE REPLACED WITH A DOOR AT LEAST 1 3/4" THICK.**



GLASS VISION PANELS OR GLASS IN THE DOOR



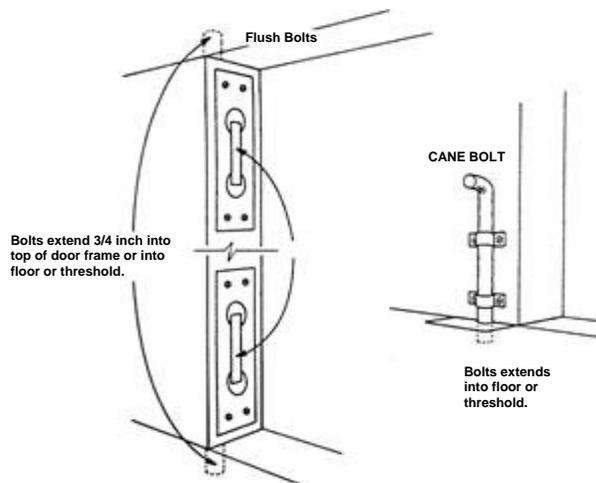
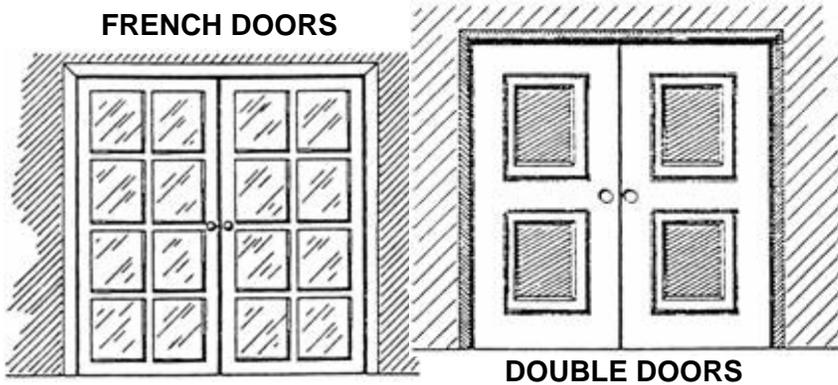
Doors containing windows or with adjacent glass panels can be easily defeated by breaking out a pane of glass, reaching in and unlocking the door.

Glass used in exterior doors and adjacent panels should be double paned if located within 40 inches of the lock. Shatter-resistant security film can also be added to glass. The lock mechanism can be further protected by covering the glass with expanded metal grating or polycarbonate material at least 3/16" thick.

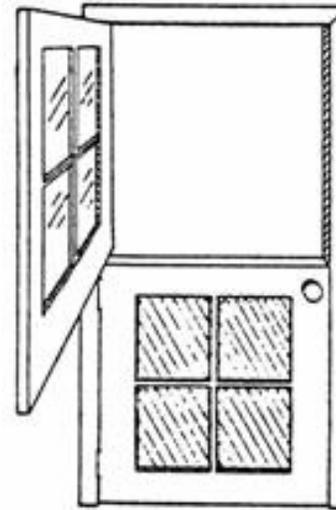


FRENCH OR DOUBLE DOORS

The glass in French doors can be treated in the same manner as glass in doors discussed previously. There are additional measures to be taken with French doors or any double door. To secure the double doors, one of the doors must be made stationary by properly installed concealed flush mounted header and threshold bolts. The active door is secured to the inactive door by using a deadbolt lock. (See the section on locks.)

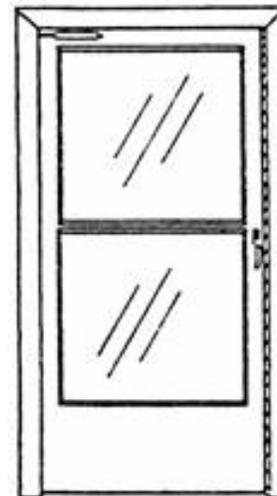


DUTCH DOORS



The Dutch door should have a concealed header or slide bolt interlocking the upper and lower halves of the door, unless separate deadbolt locks are used to secure both halves of the door. A polycarbonate such as Lexan should be used in lieu of glass.

STORM AND SCREEN DOORS



The storm or screen door offers little resistance against attack. Most storm doors can be easily pried open with a screwdriver. Screen doors offer no resistance, as the screen can be cut or pushed out. These doors are very flimsy in construction and lightweight, and will not resist forced entry. They are intended to keep insects from entering the home and to provide an airspace for insulation purposes.