

Crime Prevention Tips — Burglary

The Burglary Basics:

The most important thing you can do is call the police to report a crime or any suspicious activity. You have to be the eyes of your neighborhood. Remember, you can always remain a pair of anonymous eyes! **Light** up your residence, **lock** your doors at all times, and call the **Police** when you see something suspicious.

- Make your home look occupied, and make it difficult to break in.
- Lock all outside doors and windows before you leave the house or go to bed. Even if it is for a short time, lock your doors.
- Leave lights on when you go out. If you are going to be away for a length of time, connect some lamps to automatic timers to turn them on in the evening and off during the day.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked.
- Don't allow daily deliveries of mail, newspapers or flyers build up while you are away. Arrange with the Post Office to hold your mail, or arrange for a friend or neighbor to take them regularly.
- Arrange for your lawn to be mowed if you are going away for an extended time.
- Check your locks on doors and windows and replace them with secure devices as necessary.
- Pushbutton locks on doorknobs are easy for burglars to open. Install deadbolt locks on all your outside doors.
- Sliding glass doors are vulnerable. Special locks are available for better security.
- Other windows may need better locks. Check with a locksmith or hardware store for alternatives.

Don't Tempt a Thief:

- Lawn mowers, barbecues and bicycles are best stored out of sight
- Always lock your garden sheds and garages.
- Use curtains on garage and basement windows.
- Never leave notes on your door such as “Gone shopping.”

Locks...Get the Best:

- No lock, regardless of its quality, can be truly effective. Key-in dead bolt locks provide minimum security. Ask a locksmith for advice on your situation.
- Change locks immediately if your keys are lost or stolen.
- When moving into a new home, have all locks changed.

Targeting the Outside:

- Have adequate exterior lighting. A motion-sensitive light is recommended for backyards.
- Trim trees and shrubs so that they cannot be used as hiding places for intruders.
- Make sure your door hinges are on the inside.

Windows:

- Most windows can be pinned for security.
- Drill a 3/16" hole on a slight downward slant through the inside window frame and halfway into the outside frame - place a nail in the hole to secure the window.

Alarms:

- An alarm system is excellent for home security. It provides peace of mind to homeowners, especially while on vacation. There is a wide variety of alarm systems on the market.
- Make several inquiries to different companies for the best security system available to you.
- **If you have a home alarm system, use it!** *Activate your alarm system* — Alarm systems are only useful when you remember to activate them.
- Many individuals have alarm systems but do not arm them because it is inconvenient. Many burglars know this and will not be deterred by a window sticker or sign indicating that the home has an alarm system.

If Your Home Is Broken Into:

If you come home to find an unexplained open/broken window or door:

- Do not enter - the perpetrator may still be inside.
- Use a neighbor's phone to call police.
- Do not touch anything or clean up until the police have inspected for evidence.
- Write down the license plate numbers of any suspicious vehicles.

- Note the descriptions of any suspicious persons.

Other precautions you should take:

- Never leave keys under doormats, flowerpots, mailboxes or other “secret” hiding places - burglars know where to look for hidden keys.
- Keep a detailed inventory of your valuable possessions, including a description of the items, date of purchase and original value, and serial numbers, and keep a copy in a safe place away from home — this is a good precaution in case of fires or other disasters. Make a photographic or video record of valuable objects, heirlooms and antiques. Your insurance company can provide assistance in making and keeping your inventory.
- Trim your shrubbery around your home to reduce cover for burglars.
- Be a good neighbor. If you notice anything suspicious in your neighborhood, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Mark your valuables with your driver's license number with an engraver you can borrow from your police department. Marked items are harder for a burglar to dispose of and easier for police to recover.
- Form a Neighborhood Watch Group. We can help you work with your neighbors to improve security and reduce risk of burglary.
- Consider installing a burglar alarm system.
- File a Residential Security Request with the Gorham Police Department.

Car Burglaries

Tips on how to avoid car break-ins:

- Do not leave valuables in plain view:
(GPS devices, lap tops, PDA's, cell phones, MP3's, wallets, purses)
- Do not leave windows or sunroof open.
- Do not leave doors unlocked.
- Do not leave keys in the vehicle.
- Do not leave the garage door opener in plain view.
- Do not leave out items with personal information.
- Do not move valuable items to the trunk while in public view.
- Slow Down and use common sense before you leave your car.