

Keeping Home Safe

Safety and security starts at home. It is the responsibility of each of us to do all we can to **Make it Hard for Them to Hurt Us.**

This simple check list is designed assist in identifying weaknesses in your physical home security and allowing for opportunities for you to mitigate these weaknesses with safety tips and suggestions that are cost effective or could likely save you money on your homeowners Insurance.

Nothing can make your home “burglar proof”. But by doing simple things on the prevention and mitigation side we greatly reduce the need for a response and then a recovery.

Let’s start outside

Perimeter

- Are your house numbers marked and visible from the street? House numbers painted on the curb make it much easier for the Police/ Medical responders to find you.
- Shrubs and trees should be pruned away from sidewalks, driveways, porches, doors, windows, and gates to eliminate hiding places.
- Bushes under windows should be pruned below the sills. This allows you to see what’s going on around your home. It also eliminates a place to shield someone attempting to enter that window.
- Tree limbs and branches should be pruned upward at least six feet and shrubs down to two feet to open a clear field of view both onto and out from the property. (Known as the 6x2 Rule)
- Lighting should be directed to cover the front, rear, and sides of the house, such as motion-censored twin spots, that are vandal-resistant and mounted under the roof eaves. Be mindful of light trespass (light that passes your property line and keeps the neighbors up all night).
- The best fence is one you can see through. Privacy fences provide privacy for residents AND burglars. Gapping wooden slats enhances visibility. Place

- horizontal rails on the inside, not the outside (creating a ladder). Lock fence gates when feasible. The top pole of a chain link fence should be removed and replaced with a cable. This will still be strong enough to hold the fence but makes the fence difficult to climb.

Attached / detached garages and storage sheds

- All pedestrian doors should be solid core or metal cased, with deadbolt locks, reinforced strike plates, and guard plates to hinder prying.
- Overhead rolling doors should have a secondary locking system to compliment the electric opener. The emergency release feature can be tripped from the outside by breaking a window to pull the release cord, or by catching the hook with a device pushed through the top of the door. Prevent this by tacking the release string to the ceiling. When you need it you can simply remove the tack by standing on a latter.
- All-purpose shed doors should be secured with a high security padlock with a protected shackle or a disc lock to hinder bolt cutters. The receiving hasp should be secured with bolts through washers or a steel plate on the interior to hinder prying. (Home Depot has these as a set for \$19.00 plus a \$13.00 lock as described).
- All windows should be secured by a secondary lock such as a pin or dowel. A simple stick in the window track will do.
- Doors and windows should be illuminated at night. Once again motion lights save energy and provide for a “startle effect on the burglar as the light comes on).
- Contents, such as lawn equipment and bicycles, should be marked or inventoried by serial number and photographed. Use your cellphone to take an image of the item and its serial number or your personal marking. Store the information in a computer file. This can be done will all of your property. (I bet your kids/grandkids would be helpful doing this).

Your home's exterior barriers—

Doors-

- All exterior doors should be of a solid material, such as wood, metal cased, or fiberglass.
- All exterior doors should be secured by a deadbolt lock with a tapered or free-spinning collar, and a minimal bolt extension of 1". Locks can be installed on the door lower or higher than typical to reduce leverage, and more than one lock can be used.
- Breakable glass in the door or within 40" (arm's reach) is a concern which can be mitigated by the application of glass security laminates, acrylics, or break resistant glass.
- The strike plate on the door frame receiving the deadbolt should either be reinforced with 2.5" to 4" case hardened steel wood screws, or further enhanced with a high security strike plate kit (recommended).
- Patio or French double doors should also utilize a good deadbolt into a stationary door that is secured by header and threshold bolts into metal strikes. Because these doors are typically weak due to all the glass, a secondary barrier system is recommended, such as a charley bar or a T-bar door guard (both can be found at Home Depot/Lowe's).
- Sliding glass doors need extra security against prying and lifting. A charley bar or an old broom handle can prevent opening. Three screws into the top track, backed out to just clear the top of the door, will prevent lifting.
- All door hinges should be on the inside. If not, an extra step must be taken to secure outside hinges.
- A wooden or plastic wedge and a string can be used at night to secure the door. Slip the wedge with a string tied through the wide end (on the side of the wedge) under in the inside of the door and loop the string to the knob. To release pull the string to pull the wedge out (see demo).

Windows-

- The security of any operational window can be enhanced with a secondary lock or barrier to compliment the manufacturer's latching system.
- Wooden windows can be pinned using a drill and ten-penny nail.
- Aluminum framed windows can be better secured by installing removable track locks (pins).
- Newer vinyl replacement windows may have security "wings" or pop-out latches that stop the window from being raised.
- A simple wooden dowel, cut to fit snugly in the track, will suffice as a locking device.
- Double-paned windows, storm windows, and glass security laminates are considered secondary locking devices.
- Thorny bushes or prickly shrubs are ideal plantings below window sills (no one wants to stand in a rose bush).

Your home's interior-

Security Systems-

A burglary alarm will not prevent a burglary. It will only hurry the offender. So, don't skimp on hardware thinking that just an alarm system is sufficient to protect your home. An alarm system is only an additional security layer. Consider installing one if the home is empty most of the day, or if you own collectibles, firearms, and other valuables.

Safes—

A safe must be selected based upon its intended function. A document safe is intended to protect against fire. A security safe is designed to protect valuables. Safes come with various U.L. ratings and capabilities. If you are not willing to purchase a high security safe, place your valuables in a bank's safe deposit box. If you do utilize a security safe, it is best to secure it to the foundation of your home so that it cannot be carried away. The addition of a home alarm system will seriously shorten the time needed for a burglar to attack the safe inside the home.

Property Inventory-

Record all serial numbers of electronics such as flat screens, laptops, desktops, audio components, firearms, cellular devices, lawn equipment, bicycles and any other valuables with identifying numbers. Take digital photographs of valuables, especially jewelry and collectibles without serial numbers. Residents can register their property inventories on a secure, off-site server offered through the Insurance Information Institute.

Property storage

Some items in our homes have greater values than others or can have sentimental value which no one could put a price too. These items need special handling. If you don't have a safe to store them in put them in a place that is not common to the item (e.g. no jewelry in a jewelry box).

Guns-

One of the purposes of a gun is for you to protect yourself and other, if necessary. This can only be done when you are in the same location as the gun. Do not leave a gun out (in a nightstand or under a pillow) when you leave home (**You cannot protect yourself if the gun is somewhere else**). If you leave the gun at home **Secure It!** When you get home take it out if you chose.

Social Media-

Posting on the many different social media outlets is a great way of sharing information with friends and family. It is also a way for a predator to receive personal information about you and your family as well as information on activities, trips, and social events you may attend or be a part of. Having this information can put you in a vulnerable position.

For Example, posting or chatting on a public site about your 15 year old daughter Susie being on the Monzano High School Cheerleading Squad is telling a predator her name, where she will be, (due to school postings) her picture (school postings) and what she is interested in. With limited information the predator can go to a game or event she is at, learn what she drives, follow her home to get her address, google map her house for escape routes. He could than befriend her or wait for her to leave or return home. Be careful what is posted and it is best

to post only to private sites that require you or your family to allow others access to that sight.

If you ever advertise something that requires you to meet a buyer or seller you should request to meet at any of the Albuquerque Police Substations. Each substation is now equipped with a meeting room for such activities. It is free and it is safe.