From: Christine Jordan
To: Jim Martin;
Subject: Fw: Home Crime Prevention Tips
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2009 3:32:57 PM

Jim- do you get these announcements from Schriever? If so, I'll stop forwarding and clogging your email.
--- On **Wed, 10/21/09, Schriever, James W** ***<James. Schriever@kcpd.org>*** wrote:

From: Schriever, James W <James.Schriever@kcpd.org>
Subject: Home Crime Prevention Tips
To:
Cc: "Stewart, Wayne" <Wayne.Stewart@kcpd.org>
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2009, 3:26 PM

Community Partners; due to recent notable events in KC, I have received a lot of requests regarding home safety. Remember, as residents/business owners in KC you can make a request to your local patrol division of the Kansas City Missouri Police Department to have an officer schedule a security inspection of your residence, business or parking facility. I have also attached a few home security guidelines below. If you have any questions don't hesitate to call.

Master Patrol Officer James Schriever, CIO, Central Patrol Division, 816-759-6313, Cell 816-719-8350

Home Security Guidelines

Introduction

Of all the major criminal offenses, residential burglary is perhaps the most common. A burglary is reported

every 15 seconds in the United States . Burglars entered more than 2.1

million homes in 1995. Two out of

every three burglaries were residential in nature and at least one home in twenty in the United States was

burglarized in 1995. Criminalists say that if all break-ins were reported, the number would be more like

one in four. The average victim reportedly lost about $535, but all losses typically are not listed in police

reports. Sixty-seven percent of all burglaries involve forcible entry. with over half (52%) occurring during

the daylight hours. Fortunately, there has been a decline in burglary rates in recent years. Residential

burglary, however, continues to be a serious problem.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics defines household burglary as “unlawful or forcible entry or attempted

entry of a residence.” This crime usually, but not always, involves theft. The illegal entry may be made by

force, such as breaking a window or slashing a screen, or may be without force by entering through an

unlocked door or an open window. As long as the person entering has no legal right to be present in the

structure a burglary has occurred. Furthermore, the structure need not be the house itself for a burglary

to take place; illegal entry of a garage, shed, or any other structure on the premises also constitutes

household burglary. If breaking and entering occurs in a hotel or vacation

residence, it is still classified as

a burglary for the household whose member(s) were staying there at the time the entry occurred.

The majority of residential burglaries —— about 85% —— are carried out by youthful amateurs,

mostly males under 25 years of age, of normal intelligence, with a record of juvenile delinquency and a

minimum of education. Most residential burglaries are crimes of opportunities. The burglars devote

relatively little time to advance planning. If their advance checking and examination of the potential target

reveals a risk greater than anticipated, they often move onto what they perceive to be a safer or easier

target. Thus, the more the homeowner does to keep the home from looking like an easy target, the safer

the home usually is. This chapter will provide crime prevention tips and recommendations homeowners

can adopt to improve the safety and security of their residences.

Exterior

Lighting

It is a recognized fact that good lighting is a deterrent to crime. Lighting lets the homeowner see

the pathway they take from their vehicle to the house. It permits them to see as they stop at the

door to use their house keys. Effective lighting also forces the intruder to work in an area where

he may be exposed and reported to the police.

•• Around The House

All sides of the home should be protected by security lighting that is located high out of

reach and is vandal resistant. The best possible location for exterior residential lighting is

under the eaves of the house. This makes ground-level assault more difficult. Such lighting

should ideally be controlled by photo-electric cells that will activate them during times of

darkness.

•• Over Entry Doors

Each door should be equipped with a light that provides quality illumination in the vicinity of

the door, including both sides of the door and porch.

•• Carports And Garages

Lighting in carports and garages is critical. For garages, an automatic garage door opener is

the best choice. Almost every garage door opener made today has a light that comes on

when the opener is activated, lighting the interior of the garage. In carports, it is recommended

either to leave the light on, have the light on a timer, or have a light connected to a motion

sensor or photo electric cell.

•• Light Controls

Security lighting should be automatically controlled by photocell. Unfortunately, many exterior

light fixtures are controlled by an interior switch which can be —— and often is —— turned

off by an occupant or simply never turned on in the first place. Photocell bases which screw

into the bulb socket are available at minimal cost. The bulb is the screwed into the photocell

base. From that point on, the light will illuminate automatically as the sun goes down. To

insure the light is not accidentally extinguished, a cover can be placed over the inside switch

or the switch can simply be removed altogether.

•• Motion Lighting

Motion detection lighting is strongly encouraged, particularly in areas where lighting may be

considered intrusive to neighbors. Costing less than $50.00, such units are often direct

replacements for existing fixtures and can be selectively aimed to detect motion of an

approaching intruder and cause the light to activate. This does two things: first, the sudden

presence of the light startles the intruder, leaving him exposed to view; and second, the light

provides a friendly means to light pathways as the homeowner returns in the evening. While

there may be a concern that dogs, cats or birds will trigger the sensor and cause the lights to

come on, if the resident sets the sensitivity of the sensor correctly, this should not be a

problem.

Landscaping And Plant Materials

Bushes, trees and shrubbery can conceal an intruder as he attempts entry into a window or door;

or worse yet, as he waits in hiding for the homeowner! A few alterations to the home’s landscaping

and plant materials can be enough to discourage intruders. To avoid being seen or caught, intruders

look for property they can get into and out of quickly. Their ideal target is a house surrounded by

large hedges or shrubs, which serve to hamper visibility from the street and neighbor’s houses.

Trim shrubbery and trees so doors and windows are visible to neighbors

and from the

street. Trimmed landscaping should not provide concealment for criminals. If the home has a

second floor, prune trees so they can't help a thief climb in second floor windows. Place trellises

where they can't be used as ladders to gain entry to upper floors.

•• Ground plants (shrubbery and bushes) within four (4) feet of any sidewalks, driveways,

doors or gates, should be maintained at a height of not more than two (2) feet.

•• Ground plants between four (4) feet and eight (8) feet of any sidewalks, driveways, doors or

gates, should be maintained at a height of not more than four (4) feet.

•• Ground plants under windows should be maintained at a height that is below the window sill.

•• Trees should be trimmed so that the lower branches are more than six (6) feet off the

ground.

Place large gauge gravel on the ground near windows. The noise caused by an intruder walking

on it can be a psychological barrier. *Do not* place large rocks or other items near glass windows

or doors. These could provide the burglar with his tools!

Plant spiny (thorny) plants along fences and under windows. Such plants

will discourage the

possible burglar. Protecting with spiny plants can be almost as effective as using barbed wire,

and a lot more attractive. Included is a chart showing a partial list of such plants.

Gooseberry Thorns 5-3 Sun/shade White/green Edible fruit

Pampas grass Leaves 6-6 Sun White Fast Growth

Lisbon Eureka Thorns 8-5 Sun White/yellow Fragrant flowers

Bearss Thorns 6-5 Sun White/green Fragrant flowers

Needle Bush Leaves 8-8 Sun White Drought tolerant

Chinese holly grape Leaves 6-3 Shade Yellow/blue For narrow spaces

Calif. holly grape Leaves 5-4 Sun/shade Gold/blue Drought tolerant

Hybrid holly Leaves 6-5 Sun/shade White/red Self pollinating

Upright juniper Leaves 12-6 Sun Hedge or screen

Jerusalem thorn Thorns 20-25 Sun Yellow/blue Hedge or screen

Firethorn Thorns 15-10 Sun White/red Good Espalier

Dwarf firethorn Thorns 5-5 Sun Orange/red Compact growth

Prostrate firethorn Thorns 4-10 Sun White/red Cover for slopes

Fruiting pomegranate Thorns 10-6 Sun Orange/red Edible fruit

Dwarf pomegranate Thorns 3-3 Sun Orange Non-fruiting

Rasberries/blackberries Thorns 8-8 Sun Ornge/blk/Red Fast growth

Bush roses Thorns 6-4 Sun Many Good cut flowers

Climbing roses Thorns 12-6 Sun Many Fence protection

Spanish bayonet Leaves 6-4 Sun Drought tolerant

Dwarf xylosma Thorns 5-4 Sun/shade White Glossy foliage

Limiting Access

Intruders look for homes that have few or no obstacles blocking a quick exit. Fences can prevent

burglars from carrying away large items if the gates are locked. Fence gates should be locked at

all times, even when the owner is at home. Ladders and tools should be stored in a garage or a

storage shed, and these facilities should be locked.

House Numbers

House or street numbers on a home should be easily visible from the street. Critical time can be

saved by emergency responders when the street address for the house is visible from a distance.

•• On the House

–Use numbers made of reflective materials, or black on white, that are 6 inches high.

–Keep numbers looking new and clean and replace when necessary.

–The numbers should be placed under a light and near the front door or garage entrance.

•• Paint the House Number on the Curb

–Four (4) to six (6) inch high black letters on white background is most effective.

–The numbers painted on the curb should be centered at the end of the driveway or just

to the house side of the driveway.

–If the house is located along an alley, the house number should be painted on the fence

outside the alley gate.

Utility Entry

•• Electric Power Entrance

Exterior electric panels often contain disconnect switches which can totally shut off power

to the house. Electrical panels should be checked to insure that they are equipped with a

disconnect switch lock or other provision that makes it difficult to extinguish power. The

homeowner should be encouraged to install a number of wall mounted

rechargeable handheld

flashlight units with base chargers at various locations in the house, including all bedrooms

and primary living spaces.

•• Telephone Entrance

Accessible lines permit telephone service, and thus the ability to call for help, can be severed

by simple wire cutters. Where possible, these lines should enter the home high so as to be

less susceptible to tampering. If the telephone line must remain accessible, some protection

may be afforded by installing the line in rigid conduit and termination points in lockable

containers. The best protection, however, is a cellular telephone that can be used should the

telephone lines be taken out of service.

Doors

Doors are usually the burglars first choice of entry into a home. Believe it or not, some residents

leave exterior doors unlocked . . . . particularly children who may be the last to leave. In other

entries, the burglar simply breaks a door or a side light and reaches around to unlock a door.

•• The Door

Exterior doors should be of solid core (wood, not composite materials) or steel, 2 3/4" thick

is preferred. Hollow core or

wood panel doors can

be easily broken. Such

doors, however, can be

reinforced by attaching

at least 20 gauge

(approximately 1/

32"thick) sheet metal

on the exterior side of

the door. If this method

of strengthening the

exterior door is used.

attach the sheet metal

with carriage bolts,

spacing no further than

16" apart, around the

perimeter of the door

(see figure 3)attach

the sheet metal with

carriage bolts, spacing no further than 16" apart, around the perimeter of the door (see figure

3)

If an exterior door is equipped with glass within arm’s length (about 40") of the door

lock, break resistant polycarbonate glazing material (similar to plexiglass) attached to the

inside of the door around the sides will provide considerable delay(see figure 4).

Entry doors should fit their frames tightly,

with no more than 1/8" clearance between the

door and the frame.

Door frames should be solidly anchored to

the rough opening. There are often spaces left

between the rough opening stud at a point midway

up the door jamb. These spaces create a

poor anchorage for hardware making the door

easy to kick open. If possible, the door molding

should be removed and these spaces should be

filled or “shimmed” prior to mounting any new lock strikes. If the door opens inward, the stop strip should actually be part of the wood frame, not applied. The stop strip is a wood strip installed on or milled into the door jamb (it’s the part of the jamb that the door closes on). If the stop has been applied (strip nailed on the jamb), pry it off carefully and coat the surfaces with epoxy cement. Then hammer the stop back in place and further secure it with tapered wood screws installed directly in front of the lock bolts. This will make it difficult for a burglar to pry up the strip and manipulate the lock from the exterior.

Door Viewer

Entry doors should have wide angle (180°) door viewers to permit the occupant to see callers

without opening the door. Such door viewers are inexpensive and easy to install (see figure 5).

Strike Plates

The strike plate is attached to the door frame. The metal bolt of the door lock slides into the strike plate to secure the door to the door frame. Heavy duty strike plates, installed with long screws (ideally, at least 3"), offer good resistance against force. Strike plates and boxes should be installed with screws long enough to reach the stud behind the jamb.

Replace weak strike plate with High Security Strike Plate. Fasten with long screws. This will also strengthen the frame system.

Replace weak strike plate on wood frames with High Security Strike Box.

Hinges

If an entry door swings outward, the knuckles of the hinges must be exposed and it may be possible to remove the hinge pins to gain entry. One solution to this problem is to replace hinges that have removable pins with hinges having non-removable pins (available at hardware stores).

Another solution is to remove the two opposing

screws (door and frame side) from the top and bottom hinges. Then insert a large finishing nail in the screw hole on the frame side, but do not hammer the nail in all the way; instead leave the head of the nail exposed ¼” to ½” above the surface of the hinge. Close the door slowly and insure the exposed nail meets and extends into the screw hold on the opposite hinge (see figure 7).

Sliding Glass Doors

Sliding glass doors (sometimes referred to as acacia doors) are easy for a burglar to enter if no remedial action is taken. Often, the door panels can simply be lifted out of the tracks. To deal with this problem, open the active door and install a number of wood screws in the track, allowing the screw to project down 3/8" to 1/2" or so. Slide the door closed, making sure the extended screws pass freely over the top rail of the door. Now try to lift the door from the track; upward movement should be stopped by the screws before the door can

clear the bottom track (see figure 8).

Once the door has been secured from lifting, an auxiliary

lock is needed because more than likely, the standard

lock supplied with the door is nothing more than a small hook

bolt that can easily be forced open. Locking bars (commonly called the “ Charlie Bar ”) are ideal

for this purpose; but a length of dowel —— an old broom or mop handle, for

example —— can also be placed in the bottom track to keep the door from

being pushed open. The dowel should be cut to a length so it fits snugly in the

track between the wall and the door frame. If ventilation is needed, another

dowel could be cut a few inches shorter to permit the sliding door to be

opened no greater that six (6) inches (see figures 9 and 10). There are also

a number of commercially produced locking devices for sliding glass doors.

Those operated by keys are recommended for better security.

Garage Doors

The failure to close and lock the garage door often presents the most

serious security problem in the home. This should always be emphasized to the homeowner. The

following are a series of recommendations related to garage door security:

•• The garage door should be locked at all times (even when the occupant is at home);

•• Overhead track operated doors are best secured with electronic door openers. They should be of the type that can be disconnected from inside the garage in the event the home is unoccupied for long periods of time;

•• A good case hardened padlock on which both ends of the shackle engage, should be used to secure the garage door;

•• For garage doors with overhead tracking, drill holes into the track above a roller with a pin or padlock inserted through the slot;

•• For garage doors that are counter-balanced, secure with two case-hardened hasps and padlocks bolted onto both sides of the

•• For garage doors that have a double out swing, mount heavy duty slide bolts to the inside of one door at the top and bottom to make it stationary. A case hardened hasp and padlock can then be bolted on

to secure the active door to the

inactive door;

•• The door leading from the

garage into the home should be a

solid wood or metal core door and

should have a good quality deadbolt

lock on it;

•• If a garage door has a "doggie

door," this can be a means of

access for a burglar;

•• Homeowners should be cautioned not to leave garage door openers in vehicles parked outside,

as they can obviously be used for

easy access into the garage.

Locks

•• Key-In-Knob Lock

A key-in-knob lock offers privacy

and convenience but does not offer

security from intruders. They can

be easily compromised by

wrenching the knob with hands or

vice grips, using credit cards or

plastic to slip the spring bolt or by simply kicking

open the door.

•• Deadbolt Lock

A deadbolt lock can provide good protection for

an entry door. When the key is turned, the lock

mechanism slides a strong metal bolt from the

door into the frame. When purchasing a lock,

the following points should be covered:

–The bolt should extend at least 1" from the

front edge of the door (a 1" throw)

–The connecting screws that hold the lock

together should be on the inside of the door.

–The strike plate should be attached to the

door frame with screws that measure at

least 3" in length.

–The cylinder should have a steel guard —

— a ring around the key section.

The cylinder guard should be tapered

or rotate around the key section (if

twisted) to prevent wrenching.

•• Auxiliary Rim Mounted Lock With

Deadbolt

This lock can be attached to a door's

surface with long sturdy screws. The

locking device on the door fits into the

plate on the frame. When the key is

turned, strong metal bars join the two

parts of the lock.

•• Keys

Improper attention to the issue of keys can lead

to a burglary. The following are suggestions to better insure keys are properly controlled:

–When someone moves into a previously occupied home, all exterior doors should be

rekeyed;

–Homeowners should keep their keys

secured at all times. They should take their

keys with them when they leave the apartment

or condominium and keep them in their pocket

or purse;

–Keys should never be loaned,

particularly where strangers are involved.

House keys should be placed on a dual key

ring that will permit easy separation from the

car key. When keys are surrendered in

connection with service or valet parking, only

the car keys should be left.

–Keys and key rings should not be

marked or identified in such a way so they can

be switch functions on automobile and

refrigerator doors.

•• Foiling

Foil, or tape, is a ribbon of metallic material that is attached to various surfaces such as

traced to the owner. Some vehicle manufacturers and vehicle credit raced

to the owner. Some vehicle manufacturers and vehicle credit companies offer a

lost key service that utilizes a serialized key tag. When installed on the key ring, postage

cost to the service is guaranteed and upon receipt of the lost keys, the service notifies

the owner of the recovery.

–Never hide a key outside. Burglars often know all the hiding places.

–Do not hang keys on hooks within plain view inside the home.

–Finally, lost or stolen keys should be reported to the appropriate law enforcement

agency immediately. The affected exterior door locks should be rekeyed as soon as

possible —— particularly if the keys were stolen.

Windows

Windows can be a way for a burglar to enter a home. The primary interest in securing windows

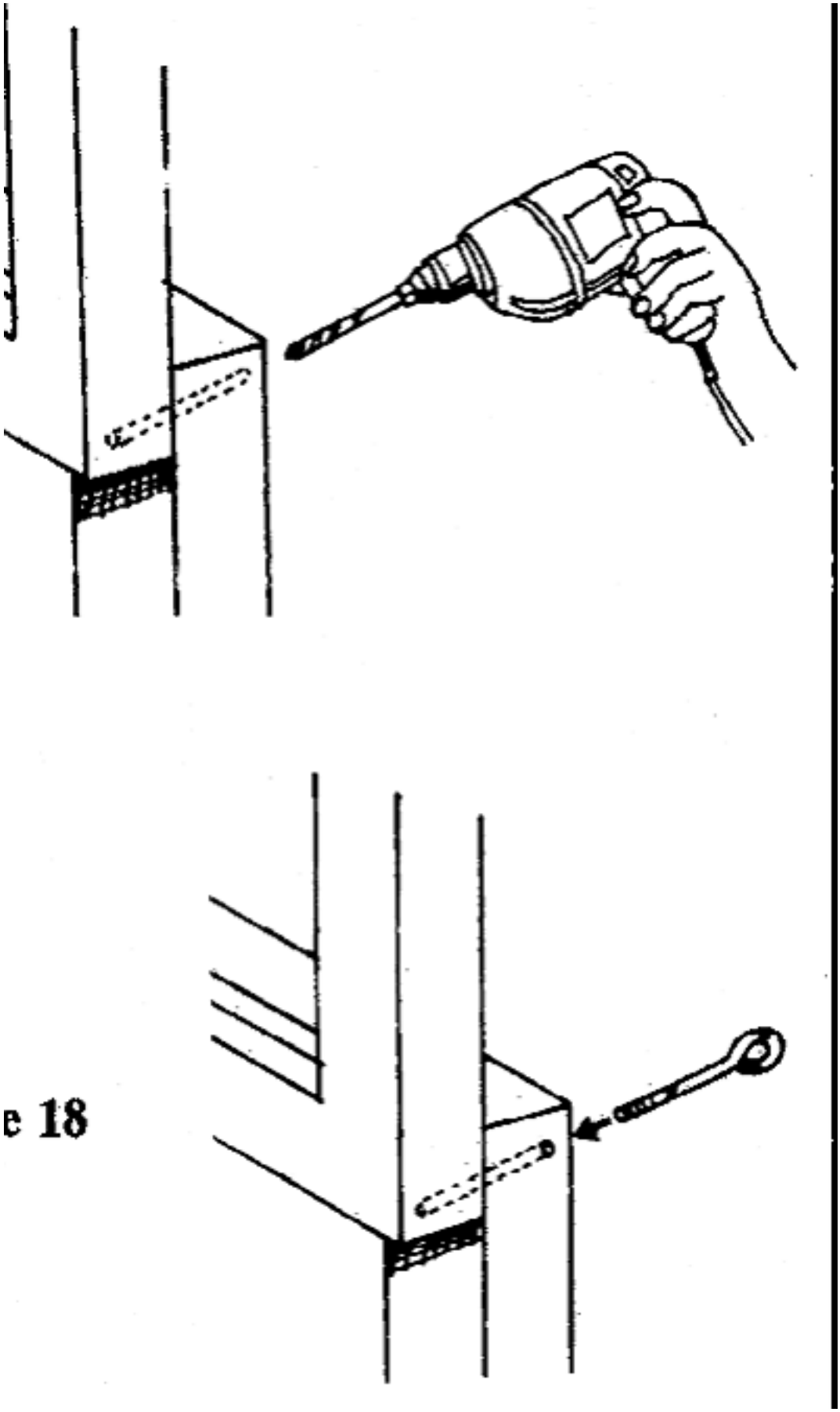
is to eliminate entry by prying open or breaking a small area of glass to reach a single latch.

•• Double Hung Windows

Double hung windows are the most

common type of window found in homes.

These units consist of two sashes that slide



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vertically. Factory supplied locks used on such windows are easily jimmied or pried open. They represent only temporary obstacles of the determined burglar.

A simple method to secure double hung windows is to drill a 3/16" hole from the inside window sash three quarters of the way through the outside sash at a slight downward angle. Then insert a nail or pin into the hole to secure the window. If the sash is wood, the pin can be made of such length as to set flush with the sash. A magnet kept nearby can then be used to remove the pin. It should be remembered, however, that room windows are often used as a means of escape from burning buildings and at least one window in each room should be available for such purposes

(i.e. the pin should be *removable* without

a magnet or tool).

•• Horizontal Sliding Glass Windows

Sliding glass windows are often fabricated

from inexpensive and lightweight

materials. Usually, locks used to provide security are similar in quality to the window. Like

sliding glass doors, sliding glass window sashes can often be lifted from their track.

Horizontal sliding windows should be treated much the same as sliding glass doors.

Header stops in the form of screws can be used to remove the space between the top rail of

the sash and the track in a way that prevents the sash from being lifted from the track. Once

this has been accomplished, a length of wood dowel or special blocking lock bar can be

installed on the window to prevent the window from sliding.

In some cases, both window sashes slide independently. The outer most sash should be

fixed in the track by screws and/or brackets. Once this is accomplished, the actions previously

recommended can be implemented.

•• Casement, Hopper or Awning Windows

These window styles generally hinge or pivot at one point and the locks used on such windows

may have lever handles that actually pull the windows tightly closed. They may also have

cranks located on the frame which, when rotated, extends the windows to the open position.

In most cases, the locks used with these styles are reasonably secure. To improve the

security of these windows, loosen the set screw in the crank handle and remove the crank

handle altogether. The evacuation issue, however, should be kept in mind.

•• "Jalousie" Windows

"Jalousie" windows which are popular in southern climates because they permit good

ventilation are generally a poor security risk. They should be replaced with solid glass or

other more secure type of ventilating window. An alternative to this approach (although

usually more expensive) is to cover or protect the "jalousie" window with a protective grill.

•• Basement Windows

Basement windows in a house often represent a unique security problem.

Basement windows

are nearly always located at or below grade. This location makes the window difficult to

secure and particularly vulnerable to intrusion. Two or three single steel bars or straps over

the windows would do much to improve security; or better yet, window glass can be replaced

with polycarbonate material giving them extra strength to resist repeated blows while still

permitting exit in an emergency.

•• Security Bars or Grills

Ornamental security bars or grills covering the inside or outside of windows can be a good

way to keep out burglars. If not installed correctly, however, such security precautions could

trap the occupant inside during a fire emergency. If security bars or grills are installed on

windows, there should be at least one window in each room that can be released or removed

from the inside without a key or special tool. They should never be installed on the windows

of sleeping rooms.

Alarm Systems

Intrusion alarm systems (“burglar alarms”) can provide valuable protection

if installed correctly

by a reliable vendor and above all, used responsibly. The existence of alarm systems is a major

determining factor in the selection of an intruder’s targets; most would prefer to go elsewhere

when faced with the possibility of an alarm.

•• The Alarm System

An alarm system is composed of three primary elements: sensors, controls and annunciation.

Sensors consist of switches, motion detectors, sound or vibration detectors and other

devices that are designed to “sense” the presence of an intruder, either the point of entry or

when he moves within the home.

–Sensors

Generally speaking, a residential perimeter system provides a number of sensing devices

attached to various doors and windows leading into the home.

¾ Magnetic Contacts

The most widely used types of perimeter sensing devices are called contacts. These

are electromagnetic devices comprised of simple switching mechanisms.

Contacts

are attached to doors, windows, transoms, and other openings so that when the

access is opened, the magnet moves away from the switch, and the alarm sounds.

¾ Plunger Contacts

Similar in operation to magnetic contacts, plungers are concealed, recessed contact

buttons generally used on doors. They operate in the same way that a hidden light

switch functions on automobile and refrigerator doors.

¾ Foiling

Foil, or tape, is a ribbon of metallic material that is attached to various surfaces such

as glass, door panels, walls, etc. The foil is designed to break when an attempt is

made to gain entry through the surface to which it is attached, thus causing the

alarm to sound.

¾ Vibration or Shock Detectors

These special sensing devices are set to react to vibrations similar to those that

result when an attempt is made to break the surface to which they are attached.

They can be used on walls, doors and particularly on windows, but proper attention

to design must be exercised for problem free operation in the home.

¾ Screens

Specially designed “insect” screens are also available to cover windows and other

openings. These screens contain inconspicuous, built-in alarm wire to protect against

entry through the screen material, and are also installed so an alarm will sound if the

screen is removed from the opening while the system is on.

While there are a great variety of interior detection devices available, only a

limited number are usually considered suitable for residential use.

¾ Pressure Mats

Generally used under rugs or carpets, these mats are really flat “switches” that

react to pressure from footsteps. Placed on doorways, hallways, windowed areas

and staircases, they can be used ideally to isolate desired areas.

¾ Photoelectric Beams

When specifically designed for residential use, these beams are small and unobtrusive,

and in some cases, are designed to resemble standard wall outlets. They cast

an invisible infrared light beam across hallways, rooms, stairwells, etc., and when

the beam is broken, the alarm sounds. Although more costly than pressure mats, the

rather considerable length of beam can compensate in some installations by allowing

large areas to be protected by a single device.

¾ Passive Infrared Systems

This type of device measures the infrared heat generated within the protected area.

An individual passing through the area, generating body heat, would be detected by

the sensor. This type has proven to be more reliable than other forms of motion

detection and is less susceptible to false alarms.

¾ Motion Detectors (Ultrasonic, Microwave)

These devices are designed to detect motion within the specific area. They operate

by filling an area with ultrasound or microwaves that are “observed” in a specific

preset pattern. A person entering the pattern, in sustained motion, changes the pattern.

This change triggers the alarm system. Since they are quite sensitive to a wide

variety of conditions, care must be exercised in installation in order to avoid frequent

false alarms. Therefore, proper attention must be paid to the location of existing air

conditioning and heat vents, telephones, loose fitting windows, etc. before a decision

to use these devices is made.

¾ Proximity Devices

These devices are very effective in protecting specific objects such as safes, file

cabinets or works of art.

¾ Panic Buttons

These devices are small buttons that may be located at various spots within the

home, particularly alongside entrance doors, and next to beds. Portable panic buttons

that operate in a manner similar to garage door opener transmitters are also

available. Such devices usually have a range between 250 - 350 feet and are most

useful when the user moves from room to room within the protected area. They

allow the occupant to manually activate the alarm system if they suspect an intruder.

Care must be exercised in locating these buttons so they aren't pushed by

children or curiosity seekers.

Controls and Annunciation

Controls for an alarm system consist of a panel and a keypad into which a code number that

arms or disarms the system is entered. Controls also perform other functions that allow flexibility

in how and when an alarm system is armed or disarmed. The annunciation part of the system is

the element that sounds the alert of the intrusion.

Important Things To Look For

In A Residential Alarm System

•• An alarm system must have a reliable power supply. The most dependability is provided by

a system that operates on household electric power, with emergency backup power provided

by a battery to assure operation during power interruption. A rechargeable means of

automatically reporting battery failure should be included. A service and maintenance contract

that includes automatic battery replacement is highly desirable.

•• Some visual or audible signal should be provided to notify or alert the homeowner of a

malfunction in the system prior to operation.

•• Any components that can turn the system on or off or render it otherwise inoperative or

ineffective should be tamper resistant.

•• All components and installation methods should meet the requirements of all applicable local

standards, regulations and codes.

•• An installed alarm system should carry a warranty covering parts and labor, from both the

manufacturer and installer for a period of no less than one year from the date of installation.

•• The installation company should by contract be required to provide service and repairs on a

prompt basis.

•• Upon installation of an alarm system, the homeowner should be thoroughly knowledgeable

of what it does and what it does not do. They should be made familiar with all the details of

operating the system and receive verbal as well as written instructions covering all possible

circumstances involving the alarm system.

Selecting The Right Alarm Company

The alarm An alarm installation company should ideally be well established and have a verifiable record

of successful operation. To check on an alarm installation company, the homeowner can possibly

contact the local police and fire departments, the Better Business Bureau, the Consumer Protection

Agency or the Chamber of Commerce. This background checking should be done *before*

the company is invited into the home.

Employees of an alarm installation company who have access to a home should be bonded.

It is also advisable to obtain a list of satisfied customers and to contact them directly.

Inexpensive Alarm Protection

There are a number of self-contained alarm systems useful to the homeowner who does not

want the benefits of a full-featured, professionally installed system. These small units can be

installed on a wall in a corridor or near a protected door or window and sound a loud local alarm

if violated. It should be noted, however, that such devices are intended only to alert occupants

and to startle an intruder; they should not be used for, nor are they intended to be used to call the

police.

False Alarms

A large percentage of electronic alarms reported to police departments are false. For the sake of

publication, a “false alarm” is defined as any alarm activation *not* caused by an intruder. False

alarms waste police resources, add unnecessary risk to the responding officers and the public in

general.

•• How To Reduce False Alarms

The following are measures or steps the occupant or tenant can take to reduce false alarms

in multi-residential housing:

–If the occupant accidentally activates the alarm, they should advise their alarm monitoring

company immediately. They need to memorize their pass code.

–All alarm users should be trained to use the system and know the codes to arm and

disarm the system; including how to cancel a false alarm.

–All loose fitting doors and windows with sensors should be tightened. A loose fit may

break the sensor contact, even without opening the door/window. Hinges and strike

plates should be adjusted so the door can move no more than 1/4".

–Do not have anything that will move (pets, plants, balloons, etc.) or stir the air (fans and

heaters) in a room that is protected with a motion detector.

–Have wide-gap sensors installed on all doors.

–Have the sensitivity settings on motion detectors and glass-breaking sensors adjusted so

unwanted sounds or items do not activate them.

–If an alarm system is activated by a storm, it should be subsequently checked and

adjusted.

–It can be arranged for an alarm monitoring company not to dispatch the police for

interior motion sensor activations without having other sensors activated. This is known

as “double sensor” dispatching.

–If an alarm system is more than five years old, the equipment should be evaluated for

upgrading or updating.

–Finally, after an alarm system has been activated, the occupant should wait a few moments

to insure the alarm system activated itself proper

Biological Alarm

The earliest “alarm systems” used by man to detect intruders were his animals. An alarm, after all, is

basically a device to discover the presence of an intruder and sound a warning —— a dog may possibly

be a good alternative for this purpose. A noisy, little dog can be a very inexpensive, very effective

intrusion detection alarm. Food, water and affection can produce an alert, mobile, self contained alarm

system which may be as effective as an electronic home alarm.

Security Closet

Each home should ideally have a security closet, for storage of firearms, silver, cameras, coin collections,

etc., within it. This closet should have load bearing walls on as many sides as possible. Heavy plywood

should be installed on the inside (plasterboard) walls. The security closet should have a solid core door, a

heavy duty deadbolt, high security strike and non-removable hinge pins. If the home has an alarm system,

the closet door or interior should be alarmed.

Home Safes

If a homeowner utilizes a safe for securing money or valuables, the safe should have a Underwriters

Laboratories (UL) burglary resistant label on it. This UL label means that the safe model has been tested

to resist attacks of a specific nature for a certain number of minutes,

Fire resistant chests and files also have UL ratings which indicate an endurance to fire in minutes

or hours. Many people do not know the difference between fire resistant safes or chests and money

safes.

Safe Deposit Boxes

Homeowners should be strongly encouraged to rent a safe deposit box in which to store: 1) compact

items of extreme value, such as diamonds or others expensive jewelry, heirlooms, and stamp and coin

collections; 2) flammable documents such as legal papers, certificates, stocks and bonds, insurance

policies, contracts and inventory and photos of household goods. Depending upon the special needs of the

homeowner, the following is a list of the type of documents that should be stored in a rented band safe

deposit box:

••Stock and bond certificates ••Income tax records

••Mortgages, property titles and deeds ••Health records

••Birth, marriage and death certificates ••Insurance policies

••PassportsPension plans ••Household inventory

••Military discharge papers ••Citizenship and adoption papers

If There is a Death in the Family

Some burglars read obituaries and know people will be gone from the home during a funeral. If there is

a death in the family, arrangements should be made for a house-sitter the day of the funeral.

Neighborhood Watch

is a crime prevention program that uses citizens, in cooperation with law enforcement, to reduce crime in

their communities. It involves neighbors getting to know each other, taking the time to watch out for each

other, and working together in a program of mutual assistance.

Neighborhood Watch is an effective means of reducing residential burglaries. By participating in

Neighborhood Watch, the homeowner will learn:

•• Effective crime prevention techniques for home safety and security.

•• How to become law enforcement's "eyes and ears" and help them provide security to residential

areas.

•• How to report a crime: what to look for, how to describe an intruder, vehicle or activity and what

additional information to give.

Vacation Crime Prevention Checklist

Burglars look for homes that give the appearance that the homeowner is away for an extended period of

time, such as a vacation. The following crime prevention tips or recommendations are designed to allow

vacationers to return to a secure residence.

•• Discontinue any deliveries to the home by phone or in person ahead of time. Do not leave notes.

•• Either discontinue mail and newspaper delivery or have a neighbor or friend pick them up ***daily.***

•• Inform neighbors of your absence so they can be extra alert for suspicious persons. Leave a key

with them so the house can be inspected. Tell them where you will be so you can be contacted in

the event of an emergency while you are gone. Possibly ask them to vary the positions of the

shades and blinds in the house.

•• If you have a motor vehicle that is not garaged, arrange for it to be moved from time to time

while you are gone.

•• A winter vacation tip —— arrange to have someone to walk up your front walkway and house

steps after a snowfall to make the house appear occupied.

•• Arrange for someone to mow your lawn, rake leaves and maintain the yard to give the home a

lived in look.

•• Do not publicize vacation plans before hand. Burglars can read the newspaper, also.

•• If your local police or sheriffs department has a home vacation program, notify them when you

plan to be away.

•• Leave your blinds, shades and curtains in a normal position. Don't close them unless that's what

you do when you are at home.

•• Have a neighbor place garbage cans at the curb on your normal pickup day(s) and return them

after the garbage pickup is made.

•• Plug in timers to turn lights and a radio or television on and off at appropriate times.

•• Turn the bell or ringer on your telephone down low. If a burglar is around, he won't be alerted to

an absence by a ringing telephone.

•• If the homeowner has call forwarding on their telephone, they should forward their calls to a

close friend or relative.