

Crime Prevention Tips: Residential Burglary

Deterrence & Preparation:

- Alarm Systems – An alarm system does not prevent a burglary. When properly designed it
 - Alerts the neighbors so they can be good witnesses
 - Alerts the Police

I recommend that your alarm system have a siren and a flashing light on the OUTSIDE of your home to draw your neighbors' eyes to your home when the alarm goes off. We want them to SEE the bad-guy.

- Neighbors – The police can't be every where all of the time, so we have to watch out for each other. When we see something that doesn't look right, ask!
 - When you see someone who looks suspicious or out of place, speak to them! Say "Hello"; if they're up to no good this may scare them away, if they're supposed to be there you've just met a new neighbor or a friend/relative of your neighbor.
 - Consider having emergency contact numbers for the neighbors on each side of your home. You want to be able to contact your neighbor if there's someone out of place at their home when your neighbor isn't there.
- Document Belongings
 - Keeping a record of serial numbers for your expensive and hard to replace items makes it easier to recover them should they ever be stolen
 - Putting identifying marks like a name or ID number on valuables makes them harder for a thief to sell and easier to identify so that they are more likely to be recovered if stolen.

I recommend taking a digital photo of the item that includes the serial number. It's easier than writing everything down and digital information is easier to store than paper files.

- Locks – People pick locks in movies, but not in real life. In real life the bad-guy breaks a window or forces open a door. When they force the door, they don't break the door, they break the little piece of white pine called the door facing. Five year old break bigger boards than that in karate class across the country every day.

I recommend using 2 long screws, 3" long or more, to screw the plate into the double stud behind the sheet rock and a long draw dead bolt (see the photo below).



This way the bad-guy has to rip through the studs in the wall to get the door open instead of just those little white pine boards. They can still get in; but it will take long, make more noise, and increase the likelihood that your neighbors will see them & call the police.

- When Burglaries Occur – Hollywood tells us that burglaries are committed at night by guys in dark clothes wearing masks; they also tell us that everybody's phone number starts with "555".

-Burglaries usually occur when no one is around to see them, during the DAY while everyone is at work and school.

-Often the bad-guy will knock on the front door and then look into a window to see if anyone is home. They may act like their looking for a friend or trying to deliver something. Then they go around the back of the house and force open a door or window.

-The bad-guy thinks there's something to take that is valuable enough to risk the consequences of being caught. Many times it's because they, or a friend, have been a guest in the home. Sometimes it's because they saw the packaging of big ticket items beside the victim's garbage can.

I recommend having up to date responder information with your alarm company, minimizing who you allow into your home, and tearing up the packaging on big ticket items so that they fit inside your trash can.

Reporting:

When you see someone or something happening that doesn't look right or you hear your neighbor's burglar alarm going off, CALL THE POLICE. Even though

the house they broke into wasn't yours, the next one might be. Worried about false alarms, many monitoring companies take 10 minutes or more before they dial the police. The bad-guy can be gone in less time than that. If your neighbor is really being victimized, we want to know as soon as possible.

Give as much detail as possible about who and what you saw, even if you don't know exact information the range can help us narrow down suspects. You don't have to know exactly how old someone is, that the bad-guy was older than 15yrs, but less than 25yrs is very helpful. Clothing descriptions and vehicle descriptions are a huge help, even knowing just the color of the car is useful. I'm not suggesting that you put yourself in harms way, only that you be observant.

Afterward:

If a crime should occur, file a report with the police (862-8600). If you would prefer your call be handled by phone because of time restraints, let the Call taker know that. The MNPD has a unit called Teleserve that is able to take some reports over the phone.