

## HOME SECURITY

- 1. Install a home security system.** A home alarm can be an effective deterrent to criminal intruders. A variety of systems are available, ranging from inexpensive, battery operated door models to monitored, motion detecting systems. Put the sign announcing the system in a prominent location.
- 2. Never open your door to a stranger.** Criminals can evaluate you and your home by posing as a door-to-door salesperson, a neighbor who has lost a pet, a person needing to use your phone, or a floral delivery person at the wrong address.
- 3. Install a wide-angle door viewer.** These are an inexpensive aid for identifying people at your doorstep. If children are allowed to open the door under certain circumstances, install a second viewer at your child's height. If you do not see anyone, don't open the door.
- 4. Never tell a stranger that you are home alone.** If they ask for your "husband" or the "man of the house", simply tell them that he is unavailable.
- 5. Do not broadcast your plans in public where others can overhear.** Burglars can use this information to determine whether your home might be an easy target in your absence.
- 6. Keep your house or apartment well lit.** Use exterior motion-sensor lights and interior lights plugged into timers to create the illusion of an occupied home when you are away. Turn on a radio when you are not home.
- 7. Do not leave windows open or uncovered.** Prevent casual observers from looking directly into your home. During the day, draw the drapes or position blinds to allow just enough light for plants. At night, cover your windows completely.
- 8. Keep trees and shrubbery around your home well trimmed.** Overgrown bushes and trees often provide excellent hiding places for criminals.
- 9. Plant "defensive" shrubbery around your home, especially beneath windows.** Bushes that feature thorns or stiff, spiky leaves are not good places for hiding.
- 10. When moving into a house or apartment, always change or re-key the locks or have the tumblers reset.** Otherwise, the previous resident - and anyone who had access to their keys - has unrestricted access to your home.
- 11. Never hide an extra key under a mat, in a flowerpot, or in any other easily accessible place.** Criminals know all the hiding places. Consider hiding your neighbor's key at your house and your keys at their house.

**12. Lock your doors when working in the yard, attic, laundry room, or any place away from your home's entry areas.** While you are busy elsewhere, burglars could easily enter your home unnoticed.

**13. Do not give information to strangers on the telephone.** Thieves often target homes using information obtained from "telephone surveys".

**14. If you use an answering machine or voice mail, do not announce your name and number as part of your message.** Avoid giving criminals any information about you. A common mistake is revealing your exact whereabouts in a message.

**15. Consider keeping a separate line or cellular phone as a security device.** Taking one phone off the hook renders other units on that line inoperable. Using a separate line or cellular phone in your bedroom is a good precaution. Where is your cell phone at night? Can you find it in the dark?

**16. Never give important information like travel plans or credit card numbers using a cellular phone.** For fewer than one hundred dollars, anyone can buy scanning equipment and listen to your cellular phone conversation.