

# Decatur Police Department



Burglars search for a home that can be easily, quickly and silently entered. Many homes can be made more secure with little difficulty or expense. The following tips may help make your home less attractive to a prospective burglar.

- 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, use automatic timers to turn lights on in the evening and off during the day.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked.
- Don't allow newspapers or mail to build up while you are away. Arrange for a friend or neighbor to take them regularly.

## **Don't Tempt a Thief:**

- Lawn mowers, barbecue grills 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."
- Never leave a message on your answering machine telling people you are away from home.

## **Check your locks:**

- 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. Patio doors can be secured by placing a metal rod or a wooden rod in the track. You can also install vertical security bolts.
- 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.

## **Alarm Systems:**

- An alarm system is excellent for home security. It provides peace of mind to homeowners, especially while on vacation.
- Make several inquiries to different companies for the best security system available to you.
- **If you have a home alarm system, use it!** 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 and 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.
- Note the descriptions of any suspicious persons in the area.
- Write down the description or license plate numbers of any suspicious vehicles.

## **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. Take photos or video record valuable objects, heirlooms and antiques.
- Trim your shrubbery around your home to reduce concealment for burglars.
- Be a good neighbor. If you notice anything suspicious in your neighborhood, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- 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.

## **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.
- Park your vehicle in a well-lighted area that will still be well-lighted when you return to your vehicle (examples include grocery stores, shopping centers, etc..)