



HOME SECURITY CHALLENGE

Is your home likely to attract a potential burglar?



The home security challenge was developed to give you an indication of the level of security in your home. Take the Home Security Challenge and learn how a little time, effort and money can greatly improve your peace of mind in and around your home.

OUTSIDE HOME

Are there clear views of all windows and doors?

YES NO

The more private an area is, the more likely it is to attract the attention of a criminal. Trim trees and shrubs that block sight lines to your windows and doors, particularly basement windows.

During the evening is there visible interior or exterior lighting that gives the impression that you are home, even if you're not?

YES NO

Install outside lighting to eliminate dark areas around doors or windows. Use motion activated lights with a low intensity feature as an alternative to bright constant level lighting.

DOORS

Is there a convenient way of clearly seeing who is at your door without opening it?

YES NO

Every entrance door should have a convenient way of clearly seeing who is there without opening it. For most doors this will require the installation of a wide-angle lens peephole or door scope. This will allow you to keep your door locked while assessing the visitor prior to opening the door.

Do all of your exterior doors have a deadbolt with at least a one-inch throw?

YES NO

Quality deadbolts should be installed on all exterior doors with security strike plates.

Are the screws that secure your entry doors and the strike plates located on the door jamb opposite the lock at least 2 1/2 inches long?

YES NO

Door kick break-ins to homes are common. Most door installations use screws less than 1" in length. This results in a door that appears secure but is relatively weak and easily prone to being kicked in. To secure a door properly the screws should be at least 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 inches long, and the strike plate should have a minimum of four offset holes.

Have you taken steps to reinforce any windows located in or next to doors?

YES NO

Glass within 40 inches of a door lock can be broken and a criminal can reach inside to unlock the door. The security of windows at the sides of doors can be improved by adding a polycarbonate panel (available at home improvement centres). Call Crime Prevention Services for details.

SLIDING DOORS

If you have a sliding door, do you have screws in the top of the track to prevent the door from being lifted out when they are in the closed and locked position?

N/A YES NO

There is a 1" gap at the top of sliding doors, which allows them to be lifted in and out of their tracks. The addition of 3 flat-wood screws in the upper track of the doors in the closed position will prevent criminals from lifting them out.

If you have a sliding door, do you have either a hockey stick in the bottom track or a security bar to prevent the door from opening?

N/A YES NO

The standard locking pin on sliding doors is usually cast metal, which is weak and easily broken. A snug fitting hockey stick or security bar should be added to the door to prevent it from being pried.

WINDOWS

SLIDING

Do the sliding windows of your home have a:
- "pin" (removable nail like object drilled through the overlapping vertical frame at a downward angle),

- piece of wood in the track beside and above the window frame (flat-head-wood screws can be substituted for the latter), or
- secondary aftermarket locking device?

N/A YES NO

Most window locks are easily broken. To prevent quiet entry, add one or more of the security measures mentioned above. Be careful not to contact the glass if drilling through the window frame.

DOUBLE HUNG

Do the double hung (moves up and down) windows of your home have a pin secondary aftermarket locking device?

N/A YES NO

The pin should be drilled on a downward angle through the top of the bottom frame and the bottom of the top frame. Be careful not to contact the glass when drilling a window frame.

CASEMENT/AWNING STYLE

Give yourself a point if you have good quality casement/awning style windows with two latches per window.

N/A YES

GARAGE DOORS

Do you always close and lock your garage door?

N/A YES NO

Thefts from garages are one of the most common yet easily prevented crimes. Keep garage doors closed and locked. Keep ladders in the garage.

VALUABLES

Do you limit your exposure to risk by storing valuables in the basement or keep them in a safety deposit box?

YES NO

Criminals know all the hiding spots on the first and second floor. The best place to put valuables is in a safety deposit box. Otherwise a good alternative is to hide valuables in a lock box in a general storage area of the basement. Criminals tend to spend a minimal amount of time there.

Have you marked all valuables with an engraver and posted Operation Identification stickers on your windows and doors to deter theft and assist in the recovery of goods in the event they are lost or stolen?

YES NO

Marked property is an effective deterrent against break and enters. See the "Mark Your Property-For Home Owners-Operation Identification" fact sheet for details on this program. Another available program is the TRACE pen. See www.traceidentified.com for more information.

NEIGHBOURS

Do you know your neighbours across the street and on all three sides of you?

YES NO

Are you involved in Neighbourhood or Vertical Watch?

YES NO

WHEN AWAY

When you are away from home do you leave lights on timers both inside and outside the home?

YES NO

Timers make a home look lived in and will potentially avoid leaving your home in darkness or leaving the outside lights on during the day.

Do you have a trusted neighbour or friend pick up your mail, newspapers and flyers when away for more than a day?

N/A YES NO

The accumulation of mail, newspapers and flyers is a sure sign that nobody's home. Avoid sending the wrong message to burglars.

Have you made arrangements to have your lawn cut and your snow shoveled when you go away?

N/A YES NO

The appearance of your home should never vary whether you're home or away. Burglars are deterred by an "illusion of occupancy".

If you have an answering machine, do you leave a message that leaves the impression you are home?

N/A YES NO

Never leave a message that says you're not home.

RESULTS

To see how you did on the Home Security Challenge, please add up the number of "Yes" answers and divide by 20 less the number of "N/A" answers.

- 100% Excellent!
- 90+% You're almost there.
- 80+% You have a little work left to do.
- 70+% Your home would benefit from further security improvements.
- 60+% It's time to address your security needs.
- 50+% Improve your security. Don't delay.
- 0-50% Your home is vulnerable – take action!

Your results reflect the level of security your home has in relation to the most common security weaknesses. Please review your security as all of the above changes to your home can, in most cases, be done at a reasonable cost. The results are substantial for the amount of money invested in your home.

Please make sure you get a copy of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Fact Sheet and Alarm Systems Fact Sheet. Additionally there are more detailed Fact Sheets on specific home security concerns. If you have any questions please call Crime Prevention Services at 905-453-2121 Ext. 4021.