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| <p>CRIME PREVENTION & COMMUNITY RELATIONS</p> |  <p>YAVAPAI COUNTY <i>Arizona</i> SHERIFF'S OFFICE <i>Serving Since 1864</i></p> | <p>HOME SECURITY TIPS 2 Pages</p> |
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Burglary involves someone unlawfully entering a building or residence and committing a crime, most often theft. Burglarizing a home can lead to a 5, 10 or even a 20 year prison sentence. Burglars often commit crimes to support an illegal drug habit, so their motivation may be more than monetary gain. If burglars need to make money to support a drug habit (possibly as high as \$100 to \$150 per day), they are going to find someone to victimize. The question is, "will that victim be you?"

Burglars choose their target the same way as other criminals do; they look for the easiest target. One question every home owner should ask is "what type of target does my home present to a would-be burglar?"

Most burglaries occur when people are away from their home, often during the day or working hours. The physical security of your home, therefore, is essential when trying to avoid becoming a victim of a property crime. There are a few steps you can take in making your home a "hard target" for a burglar or any other thief.

First, make it a habit of checking doors and windows to see if they are secure or locked. The best lock that money can buy will only work if it is activated or locked. Sadly, many crimes in the community occur simply because someone failed to turn a lock that was already installed.

Second, consider the structural integrity of the locks. Are they still able to do what they are intended to do? A sliding glass or patio door lock may need additional security (door stop or jam that is clearly visible). A single lock may need an additional deadbolt. Check the screws in the window locks as they tend to come loose if you frequently lock and unlock the windows. Furthermore, do not assume that because a window is on the second floor or higher, it will not be targeted. Although windows and doors on the ground are clearly an easier target, a determined burglar may gamble with a little extra effort to see if you have left elevated doors and windows unlocked. It will be up to you to determine if that gamble pays off.

WARNING: Never secure a door or lock to the point that you cannot readily open it to escape in case of a fire or other emergency.

Third, consider the exterior environment around your home. Sufficient lighting for the "night-time" criminals is an excellent deterrent. If you have inadequate lighting on the interior and exterior of your home that could serve as a calling card to burglars and thieves that your home may be an easy target.

Interior Lighting:

When you are away from your home, you should leave lights on. However, if you are away from home for an extended time that too could serve as a tell-tale sign that no one is home. Utilize a timer for your lights so that they turn off and on intermittently as if someone was actually at home. This can create just enough uncertainty to make a would-be burglar move on to an easier target (someone who has chosen not to take steps to protect his/her home and property).

Lights on a timer should be visible from the street to serve as an effective deterrent, as well as enabling you to come home to a house that has sufficient lighting. They are easy to operate and will save you money.

Exterior Lighting:

Only you know what type of lighting is best for your home. However, if you know you have inadequate lighting you should take steps as soon as possible to repair or replace them. Sensor lights are especially good because they ideally operate on low wattage until someone activates the sensor. The lights then switch to full power illuminating a broad area. When would-be thieves are caught in the middle of a high beam light, they simply do not know if they have been compromised. Standard lighting creates shadows and areas of opportunity to work in the dark (behind a vehicle, tree or shrub), but sensor lights catch people out in the open. It illuminates them for everyone to see (neighbors or the police on routine patrol).

Also, consider the plants and trees around your home. If you cannot see your doors and windows, then no one can see a burglar breaking into your home through those same doors and windows. Excessive plants or greenery provides excellent concealment that is a perfect environment for a would-be burglar to gain entry to your house with any number of tools at his disposal. Furthermore, excessive shrubbery eliminates the need for a rapid entry as the burglar does not have to worry about being seen by others.

Finally, get involved in a neighborhood watch or, at least, watch out for each other. Find someone that you know and trust on your street to help look out for your home and property and vice versa. Crime prevention is a community effort. The Yavapai County Sheriff's Office committed to involving citizens in our crime prevention strategies. We need your help to make our community a safe, more secure place in which to live.

If you are a victim of a crime, there is one more step you can take to help bring those responsible to justice. In the past, it has been called "Operation Identification", but it is simply creating a written inventory (item, make, model and serial number) of all your valuables. If someone steals something from you and you have the serial number to provide to the police officer, it will be recorded into the National Crime Information Center database. If the item is found, across the street or across the country, officers will be able to collect your property and charge the person who has it with receiving stolen property. Police having documentation of stolen property can be the difference between a suspect still walking the streets or being behind bars where they belong.