



Home Security Workbook

Compliments Of:

**Sheriff Donald F. Eslinger
Seminole County Sheriff's Office**

Topics Covered:

How to Secure Your Home
Securing Your Door and Door Frame
Deadbolts
Patio Doors (Sliding Glass Doors)
Windows
Lighting
Dogs
Deterrence of Occupancy
Children Home Alone

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SECURING YOUR HOME

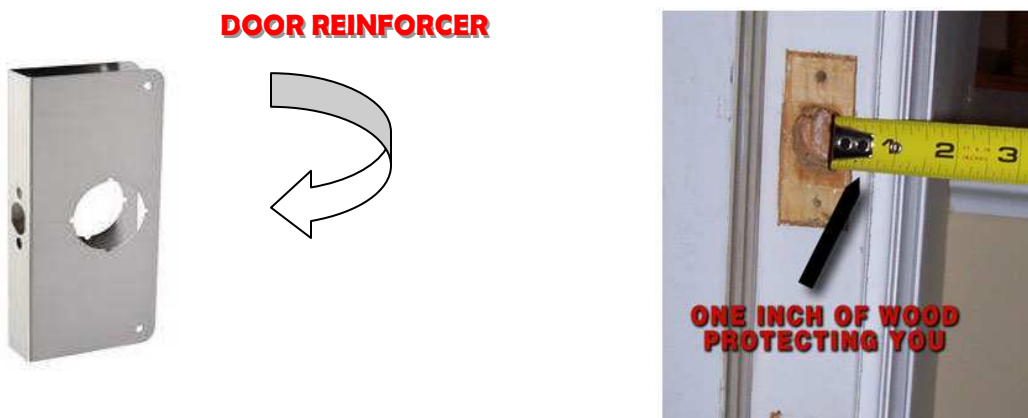
The length of time a burglar spends attempting to get into your home is proportional to the probability of detection. The chance of being seen and possibly identified is the burglar's biggest fear. Most burglars allow themselves one to two minutes to get into a home. Beyond that, the risk of being caught becomes too great.

When considering home security, a homeowner needs to "invest" in quality security hardware and ensure it is properly installed. Unfortunately, homeowners cannot always assume a new home contains quality security hardware. The cost of a new home is no indication of the level of security hardware that is installed.

THE DOOR AND THE DOOR FRAME

An exterior door is only as strong as its weakest part. A high quality lock installed in a door attached to a weak frame remains vulnerable to forced entry, and is equivalent to putting a padlock on a paper bag. In order for an exterior door to be an effective barrier between the burglar and their target, three aspects of a door assembly must be addressed and secured: **the door, the door frame, and the lock.**

All exterior doors should be 1 ¾ inches thick. Regardless of their type (wood or steel), most residential doors have wood-framed edges, which need to be protected to prevent splitting at the deadbolt. To counter door splitting during an attack, the door should be equipped with a strike plate, or door "reinforcer." Strike plates are found in most hardware stores and are easy to install. A strike plate significantly increases the rigidity of the door edge and reduces the chance of the door splitting around the deadbolt area. Some steel-edge doors are adequately protected without a strike plate.



Standard strike plates are secured with two screws, which offer little or no protection against door frame failure. It is recommended that all exterior door frames be fitted with high-security strike plates. Available in a variety of designs, high-security strike plates utilize four or six offset screws and are usually constructed of heavy-gauge brass or steel. It is further recommended the strike plate be secured with at least 3-inch screws with a hardwood filler (blocker) inserted between the door jamb and wall structure (studs).

The **Striker** is a high-strength steel strike-plate which attaches to the 2x6 door framework with **six 3-inch-long high-strength screws**. This piece prevents an intruder from forcing the door open, either by impact or by wedging.



The door frame is often referred to as the door jamb, which is inherently weak. In most cases, the doorframe is the weakest component of the door assembly. Door frames are usually constructed of soft wood and offer little or no resistance to splitting. The most important point of any door security system is the place where the deadbolt lock meets the frame. Adequately anchoring the strike plate to the wall structure of the house is critical. A strike plate is a piece of metal, usually brass or steel, that attaches to the door frame and receives the lock bolt. Standard strike plates are secured with two screws, which offer little or no protection against door-frame failure. It is recommended that all exterior door frames be fitted with high-security strike plates. Available in a variety of designs, high-security strike plates utilize four or six offset screws and are usually constructed of heavy-gauge brass or steel

Prevalent in residential subdivisions are entryways with side lights on one or both sides of the exterior door. While these types of doors are aesthetically pleasing, without proper security, they offer very little protection. Breaking the glass will not help a burglar reach the lock if the glass is protected with metal mesh or impact resistant film.



Ordinary glass in doors and in sidelights — the glass panels on one or both sides of the door — can easily be broken to gain access to the door lock. Replace ordinary glass with laminated glass, wired glass or impact-resistant acrylic or polycarbonate plastic. Residents may consider installing tint to the glass panels that would prevent a burglar from seeing inside but still allow the resident to see outside.

THE DEADBOLT:

A **DEADBOLT** not only increases the security of any door, but is also among the least expensive and easiest of locks to install. It consists of a sliding metal bar mounted horizontally in a door's edge and is operated by a key and a small knob called a thumb turn. However, keep in mind that a door with a deadbolt may still be kicked in if the door and door jamb has not been reinforced.

For more information on how to better secure your front door, door frame and also reduce the chances of a kick-in; visit www.jambbrace.com or www.nokickins.com.*

**The Seminole County Sheriff's Office does not endorse or guarantee the effectiveness of any products sold by above mentioned companies.*

Most homes have deadbolts on their main entry doors, but it is wise to add them to doors leading to the garage and to doors on outdoor storage sheds.



One example of a new technology in dead bolt locks is digital. The job of the deadbolt is to defeat the attacks of a thief and to make it tough enough that the thief will give up. Locks in the US are graded by their ability to withstand attack by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The locks are graded from levels 1 to 3 with level 3 being the least secure. Be careful, some locks are imported from other countries and do not have an ANSI grade.

Some of the features you should look for; at least a 1'inch bolt throw, solid metal tapered outside housing with a rotating cylinder guard; reinforced strike plate that is fastened with long enough screws to attach to the underlying support framing; a tumbler locking mechanism and contain a case hardened roll pin to resist sawing.

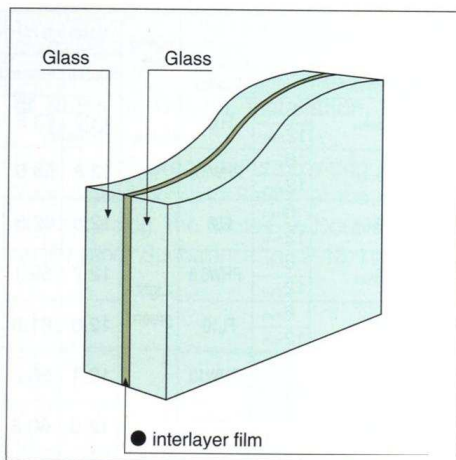
PATIO DOORS:

Common to both old and new homes are patio or sliding glass doors. While patio doors contain a large glass area, breaking glass is one of the least desirable ways for a burglar to gain entry. The amount of noise involved in breaking the glass, and the potential for suffering an injury, ensures that in most cases burglars will look for an easier and safer mode of entry.

Measures should still be enacted to protect the glass area against breakage.

The application of an impact-resistant material, such as security film, may be considered. Security film has limitations, so it is critical to install such products to manufacturer's specifications. A superior glazing product is laminated glass. Laminated glass is the type of glass used in automobile windshields. It offers resistance to penetration that other glass products do not have.

■ Cross-Section of Laminated Glass



Patio doors can also be defeated by prying the lock or by lifting the door out of its track. Fortunately, both of these types of attacks can be prevented. To help prevent forcing the door open, a secondary-locking device reinforcing the door lock should be used. Some examples include pins and "Charlie bars.". Available at most hardware stores, these devices are inexpensive

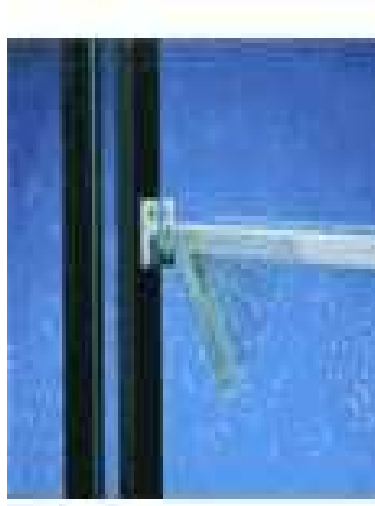
and easily installed. To prevent the patio door from being lifted out, it is recommended a homeowner use evenly spaced screws inserted in the upper slide track. The head of the screws should protrude just enough to allow free movement of the door, but prevent the door from being lifted out of its track.

THREE WAYS TO ELIMINATE LIFT

Upper Pin



Charlie Bar



Lower Pin



WINDOWS:

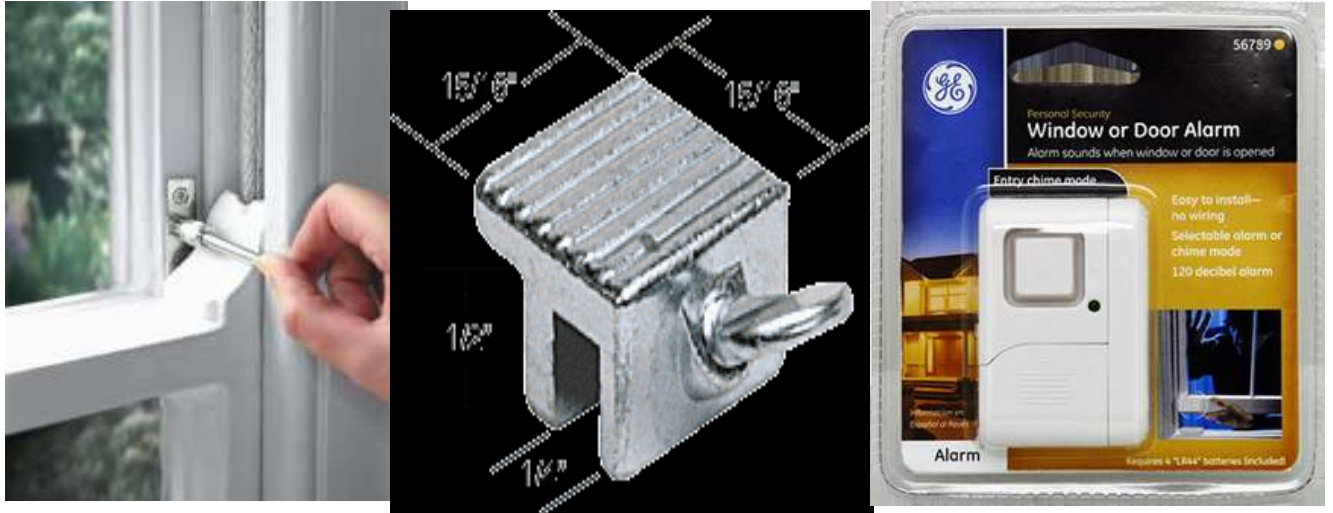
Very few windows are manufactured with security as the main consideration. Almost all windows today are designed for aesthetics and energy efficiency.

Single or double-hung windows have built in locks and are the most common windows found today. Additional window locks should be added as an extra measure of security. Casement and jalousie windows are very difficult to secure and are very susceptible to prying. When considering window replacement or during construction of a new home, ask whether the window unit meets or exceeds the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) F588-97. Windows meeting or exceeding this standard have been tested for their ability to resist forced-entry attacks. Window units meeting the ASTM standard are an improvement from the typical builders-grade window unit and are more costly. Many homeowners in Florida are having impact resistant film installed on all glass

and window surfaces for both hurricane and security reasons. Insurance companies will often offer discounts for these improvements.

There are some inexpensive yet effective ways to help secure windows.

THREE INEXPENSIVE WINDOW SECURITY TOOLS



LIGHTING:

Lighting can be one of the biggest deterrents to burglars. Lighting is often the most recommended, yet misunderstood security suggestions. In general, a residence will benefit from leaving lights on during hours of darkness. Lighting assists the police with identification of street addresses and provides the entire neighborhood a more secure feeling. The sides and rear of the home are different. Motion sensitive lighting is preferred for several reasons:

- It increases the potential for witnesses by suddenly illuminating the environment. The human eye is naturally attracted to light.
- It saves on light-bulb maintenance costs, because lights are activated only when motion is detected, and they cycle off when activity ceases.
- It may create a "fight or flight" response for the perpetrator.

EXAMPLES OF MOTION DETECTOR PLACEMENT



LANDSCAPING:

When you look at your home from the street, think about security. What you plant in your yard and garden affects the safety of your family and home. Security landscaping means selecting plants and managing existing landscape to make your home **more visible and secure**. No home is totally burglar-proof, but security landscaping that is hostile may act as a deterrent to a potential thief. If you restrict free access to a prowler, he will look for an easier target.

Following these four easy steps, you can shape your yard into a more secure, harder target:



Trim existing shrubbery or bushes to eliminate hiding places for a prowler. Trim tree branches away from your windows or balconies so a burglar cannot use trees or bushes as a ladder.



If you are changing your landscape, think about using hostile shrubs, trees or vegetation that can enhance your security. To discourage entry through windows plant cacti, roses or thorny bushes under your windows. Upright juniper and barberry grow into dense screens. Their prickly foliage discourages hiding. Ocotillo is excellent for a bare corner or rock garden.



Plant low-growing shrubs in your yard that will reduce hiding places for unwanted activity while allowing neighbors to see suspicious activity. Neighborhood Watch people or cruising Deputy's cars can quickly scan your home for anyone lurking around windows or doors. Holly and firethorn are decorative, thorny and require minimum care. For drought climates, Spanish bayonet and needle bush are good choices.



Ask your local nurseryman or landscaper for suggestions of plants suited to the style of your home, the climate and your soil. Many of the plants that are desirable for security are also excellent for reducing landscape water use. They require less water and often require minimum care. These plants can be functional and beautiful.

You do not need a big budget for security landscaping. Stand at the street, and look at your house to see what simple changes you can make. Sometimes just removing a lush overgrown bush and

replacing it with a decorative protective shrub will make it safer for you and your home. You can gradually replace aging trees and shrubs over a few years with plants that evolve into a secure landscape that helps deter criminal activity in and around your home. Homes with landscaping that is not well-maintained and trimmed often invite criminal activity.



Overgrown shrub make for excellent “ambush” point, hiding, and other nuisances. Onlookers cannot see hidden dangers.



Hedges trimmed to proper two feet rule. No place for intruders to hide. Shows “Pride of Ownership”.

DOGS:

Dogs have proven to be an effective deterrent to burglars. Researchers Paul Cromwell, James Olson and D'Aunn Avary write in their book, *Breaking and Entering: An Ethnographic Analysis of Burglary* (Sage, 1991) **“When asked what were considered absolute “no go” factors, most burglars responded that dogs were second only to occupancy. However, approximately 30% of the informants initially discounted the presence of dogs as a deterrent. Yet, during “ride alongs” the sight or sound of a dog at a potential target site almost invariably resulted in a “no go” decision.**

But are all dogs good deterrents? Professional dog handlers suggest some breeds are better at “watchdog” duties than other breeds. Dr. Stanley Coren in his book, *The Intelligence of Dogs: A Guide to the Thoughts, Emotions and Inner Lives of Our Canine Companions* (Bantam, 1995) consulted experts and found the following breeds to be good “guard dogs” Bull Mastiff, Rottweiler , Doberman pinscher, Giant Schnauzer, German Shepard and Rhodesian ridgebacks.

However, keep in mind that certain home owner's insurance policies will not give homeowner's insurance to dog owners of certain breeds for liability reasons. *Another important note to remember is that with some criminals, a dog's presence may not discourage them from breaking in.*



With microwave technology, electronic barking dog alarm is able to "see" through walls and actually determines when someone is approaching. If an intruder comes within 20 feet, it will begin barking like a true to life angry German shepherd.

CHILDREN HOME ALONE:

One of the universal recommendations made to parents that have children who stay home alone is "don't answer the door." Given the information about a burglar's method of checking for occupancy, it is not recommended for children to remain quiet to create the illusion the house is unoccupied. Parents should consider strategies for their children to deal with this possibility. A child opening the door is much different than children making noise and creating the unmistakable "fact" that a house is occupied. If children are left home alone, the physical security of the home is paramount.

Misconceptions were demonstrated in the fall of 2001 when the Prairie Village and Overland Park communities in Kansas experienced three home invasions where children were home alone during the day. The burglar came to the front door, knocked, got no answer and went to the rear of the residence and kicked in the back doors. Given the deterrent value of occupancy, parents should teach their children strategies to acknowledge someone at the door rather than to remain silent. Teach your child to make noise and say **THROUGH THE DOOR** (never tell them to open the door) "Mom, Dad, someone's at the door". If the knocking persists, have them call 911, then you, in that order...If it seems as if entry may be made into the front door, your child with a cell phone in hand

should quickly exit through the rear of the house and go to a pre-designated safe place in the neighborhood. Instruct them to stay on the phone with the 911 dispatcher until the dispatcher tells them it is ok to hang up.

However, keep in mind that the mindset of every criminal varies. While the possibility of an occupied home may act as a deterrent to one criminal, it may not for another.

The Seminole County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit offers free home security assessments for all Seminole County residents. To schedule a home security assessment, please call one of the following numbers; (407) 665-6977 (for North Region residents living in the unincorporated areas of Sanford, Lake Mary, Longwood); 665-6480 (for East Region residents living in the unincorporated areas of Geneva, Chuluota, Oviedo, Winter Springs, Casselberry); 665-6748 (for South Region residents living in unincorporated areas of Altamonte Springs, Longwood, Apopka, Casselberry).

The information contained within this guide is meant to be an aid to the homeowner in securing the home against possible theft. By using these suggestions, we do not guarantee that you will not be a victim of a burglary or theft.