

# **CRIME PREVENTION IN YOUR HOME**

by

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## **A. Your Goal**

Your goal is to reduce the opportunity for criminals by making yourself, family, car, home, and neighborhood less of a target for criminal activity. Effective Crime Prevention can be described as similar to putting together "a puzzle". The more pieces you put into place, the better off it looks. Every piece you leave out creates an opening or an opportunity for someone to victimize you!

## **B. Home Safety and Security – Physical Security**

- **Address**

- visible
- contrasting colors from background
- back-lighted or mounted near a light source
- 4" numbers - minimum
- front of home and curb (curb alone is not good enough; may be blocked by cars)
- not mounted on doors or garage doors (so not visible if door is open)
- keep trees and bushes trimmed away from address numbers

- **Landscaping**

- criminals should not be able to hide in your yard, day or night
- plants should be trimmed up from ground level to reveal "feet"
- trimmed below window level
- trimmed away from doors, windows, sidewalks, walkways, garages, gates
- trees and large bushes should not provide climbing access to the roof, fence ledge, upstairs windows, alarm boxes, light fixtures, etc.
- special landscaping can be used as barriers and deterrents (cactus, rose bushes, etc.)

- **Lighting**

- a. a dark house can attract criminal activity and create opportunities for criminals to work undetected
- b. leave at least one light on outside the front of your home all night
- c. it is an inexpensive deterrent, and it looks nice, too
- d. if everyone on the block does it, it creates a highly visible environment
- e. do not leave exterior lights on during the day (can be a “giveaway” that you are not home)
- f. mount lights high enough so criminals cannot easily loosen bulbs or destroy fixtures
- g. mounting a light on the corner of a home will light up both sides
- h. lighting should not create a nuisance to your neighbors or motorists (i.e., shining directly into windows - can be a violation of the RMC)
- i. ground mounted lights look nice, but are easily damaged
- j. motion detectors - can be useful and beneficial (not recommended as the only front light source because your yard will be dark until someone gets close enough to activate the sensor). They are adjustable for sensitivity. Pets can activate them, depending on how they are adjusted and where they are mounted. They are especially useful in side and rear yards.
- k. photoelectric cells – automatically turns lights on at dusk, off at sunrise
- l. timers all available for interior and exterior uses
- m. lamps on timers; gives the home a lived in appearance

- **Doors**

- a. solid core wood is recommended
- b. at least 1 ¾” thick
- c. no glass within the door (someone could break glass, reach in, and unlock it)
- d. paint all surfaces and edges (preserves the wood and keeps moisture out)
- e. no glass windows next to door (if so, replace it with polycarbonate, wood, etc)
- f. metal doors tend to dent and bend

- **Double Doors**

- a. They are weaker than single doors because of their design
- b. Should have 3 point locking: top, bottom, deadbolt in the center

- **Dog or Cat Doors**

- a. Not recommended
- b. Someone may be able to reach inside and unlock the door
- c. Small person can crawl through
- d. Invites vandalism - (Running a garden hose inside and flooding the house)
- e. Other animals can come in (skunks, squirrels, etc.)

- **Key Control**

- a. don't hide keys outside (under door mats, flower pots, rocks)
- b. burglars know where to look for "hidden" keys
- c. someone may also see you retrieve it
- d. give an extra key to a trusted neighbor, instead
- e. have locks re-keyed when moving into a new home
- f. don't give / loan keys to repair or housekeeping people

- **Hinges**

- a. they should be on the inside
- b. if they are on the outside, you may "pin" hinges so the door cannot be easily opened even when the hinges are removed
- c. some hinges have non-removable pins
- d. use long 3" screws to attach hinges

- **Locks**

- a. Deadbolt with at least a 1" throw
- b. rotating cylinder guard, beveled, 5 pin pick resistant tumbler
- c. single cylinder with latch on the inside
- d. NOT a double cylinder with a key on the inside – Fire Code Issue (Dangerous! - People can get locked inside if the key is removed; People have died in fires because they could not escape)
- e. Spring Latch locks are easily defeated by prying, with a knife, even a credit card (NOT RECOMMENDED as the only lock on a door).

- **Strike Plates**

- a. minimum of 4 screws, 3" in length
- b. screws should go well beyond the trim and into the studs
- c. Key point: Make sure the hole in the wall that supports the deadbolt is deep enough to allow the deadbolt to fully extend into the wall (demonstrate). If it does not fully extend, the deadbolt can be opened with a screwdriver/knife/etc

- **Peep Holes**

- a. Mount at a usable height for adults and children
- b. 180 degree
- c. mount it the right way (not so people can look in!!)

- **Sliding Glass Doors**

- a. often a favorite entry point for burglars
- b. can be lifted out of tracks, pried open sideways, or smashed
- c. install metal or plastic anti-lift shims (or screws) in the top track, on both ends and middle to make it difficult to lift the door up and out of its track
- d. install secondary locks at the bottom of the door track; these mount to the floor and insert into a hole that you must drill into the base of the door; be careful not to crack the glass when drilling the hole; do not use key operated locks because they can create a fire hazard; never install these locks on the upper part of a door (hard to see and reach during a fire, and hard to reach for children and shorter adults).
- e. Plastic pipe "dowels" can also be used in the bottom track; they can sometimes be forced out with a knife from the outside; wooden dowels tend to swell if they get damp so they may get stuck in the track)

- **Garage Doors**

- a. Most of Rocklin's garage burglaries occur because people leave their large garage doors wide open when they are not inside the garage. Consequently, bikes, tools, sporting equipment, etc., frequently disappear. This is the classic crime of opportunity. You should also be aware that once someone gets into your garage, they can close the door and work on getting into your home without being seen or heard by neighbors. Garage doors can also provide an opportunity for more serious crimes to occur in your home (stranger attacks, sexual assault, etc.). Other garage burglaries occur because side garage doors are left open, are poorly constructed (hollow core), have glass in them, or have no deadbolt/security strike plate system.
- b. Side garage doors: Should be solid wood and have a good deadbolt/strike plate system. Make sure hinges are on the inside.
- c. Garage to home doors: The door leading from the garage to the home should always be kept secured! It should also be a solid door, fire rated with a good deadbolt/strike plate system. Make sure the hinges are on the inside.
- d. Although Rocklin does not experience a great deal of burglaries involving forced entry to large front garage doors, they may happen occasionally.
- e. Manual lift up doors: use padlock/hasp; both sides
- f. Electric lift up doors (one piece): use padlock/hasp, Gravity Drop into cement
  1. Don't leave your remote control in your vehicle (it is like a key to your home)
- g. Electric sectional doors: use padlock or pin in door track to stop the rollers. You may also "turn off" the door so it cannot be opened. Check the door to see if it can be forced upward when the unit is turned off. Also, your electric door opener should be the type that changes frequencies automatically so it is not easy for someone with a radio frequency monitor and transmitter to capture your transmitter's specific radio frequency.

- h. Occasionally, one person's remote control may open another nearby neighbor's door. If that is the case, have a garage door service technician change the frequency.
- i. Electric key operated doors: There have been instances where people have squirted water or another liquid into the key hole causing the lock to short out and the door to open! Consult a professional locksmith to remedy this problem.
- j. Any garage door can be secured from the inside with a padlock or similar locking system if you will be away for an extended period of time and desire additional security. Inserting a padlock in the track of a rolling door, for example, will prevent the door from opening. Many roll-up doors come with a factory installed "slide bolt". If you use it, don't forget to unlock it before you use your remote control! You could damage your electric door system if you forget.

- **Padlocks and Hasps**

- a. don't buy cheap locks and hasps
- b. solid one piece case hardened steel
- c. ball bearings, shackle 7/16" thick, heel and toe locking, five pin tumbler
- d. key locks tend to be more secure than combination locks (although many of today's high quality combination locks have improved)
- e. keep the padlock locked even when the gate is open (so no one can steal it or replace it with their own lock when you are not looking)
- f. American 700 series = \$25.00, 747 = \$75.00 (good quality lock)

- **Windows**

- a. Sliding – install sheet metal screws in upper track to prevent lifting; install secondary locks that are securely attached to the bottom track; don't use twist type unless you drill a hole through the track; the twist type tend to fall off
- b. Crank Out – drill a small hole through latch – insert pin;
- c. Double Hung – drill a hole in top corner of the bottom window to the bottom of top window; drill hole at angle; insert a removable pin to "connect" the two
- d. Louvered – remove each pane, sand glass and metal frame where they meet; glue glass with Epoxy Resin Glue

- **Window Bars**

- a. "Prison-like", NOT recommended; they are expensive; not visually appealing
- b. specifications: 3/4" solid bars with no more than 6" between bars
- c. they do provide good security, but they can also be dangerous because you may not be able to escape (or it may take the fire department longer to get in to conduct a rescue)

- d. Windows bars **MUST HAVE AN INSIDE RELEASE MECHANISM**
- e. **CONTACT RFD BEFORE INSTALLING WINDOW BARS (625-5300)** for requirements

- **Window Glass and Alternatives**

- a. If you have standard glass somewhere that is particularly vulnerable (i.e., glass near an exterior door), consider replacing it with a stronger alternative.
- b. Standard Plate Annealed or Float Glass: basic glass, brilliant finish, No distortion, poor security - breaks easily; shatters and cuts.
- c. Tempered Glass: 6 times stronger than standard glass; will shatter into small harmless pieces; some visible distortion
- d. Wired Glass: will still break; will not shatter with intense heat; no visible distortion
- e. Laminated Safety Glass: no visible distortion; when broken, it won't shatter and cut.
- f. Acrylic - 17 times stronger than glass; excellent clarity
- g. Polycarbonate - 30 times stronger than acrylics; excellent strength; some visible distortion

- **Alarm Systems**

- a. Recommend a loud audible alarm that is monitored by an alarm company that will notify the police if an activation occurs
- b. Alarms can be a great deterrent. Visible alarm boxes, stickers, and signs are encouraged. Why would a burglar select a house with an alarm system when he can select many other homes on the same street that do not have alarms?
- c. There are no private alarms systems that are monitored by the Rocklin Police Department. They all use private companies that call the police.
- d. Make sure to use a reputable company and product.
- e. Make sure the company is licensed to do business in Rocklin. (Call the City of Rocklin Finance Dept. (625-5020); they can check business licenses)
- e. Check the Better Business Bureau for company history
- f. Check Consumer Reports or other product quality information
- g. Make sure the system has a battery back up
- h. Make sure phone wires are as secure as possible (to avoid being cut)
- i. Some alarms use a cellular calling system to avoid wire-cutting problems
- j. If you cannot afford the monitoring fee, at least have a loud audible alarm
- k. Although silent alarms are available, they may not scare off an intruder. Therefore, you are depending upon the police to arrive in time to apprehend the intruder, and that may not happen.
- l. A system with a manually activated panic alarm is highly recommended
- m. Alarms come in many types and expenses. Shop around! Get at least 3 estimates.

- n. Available features include window/door contact switches, motion sensors, pressure pads, window tape, glass breakage sensors, audible monitoring, etc.

- **Gates and Fences**

- a. Gates should be padlocked. This means an intruder has to climb over a gate or fence to get into your yard. That is a deterrent, and it looks suspicious if someone does climb over. It also makes it difficult for a burglar to carry large items out of your backyard because it will be hard to lift them over the fence.
- b. Fences should be no higher than 6" (additional lattice work is allowed)
- c. Swimming pools must be fenced at least 5' high with a secured gate that latches (RMC)

- **Dogs**

- a. can be a good deterrent
- b. can create noise problems (and litter problems, too!)
- c. you can incur liability if it bites someone
- d. can be cited for RMC section if it gets loose or you walk it without a leash
- e. make sure you have adequate fencing and gates
- f. sign issues (a "Dog on Duty" or similar sign is better than a "Bad Dog" sign; for civil liability reasons you should avoid signs that imply that your dog is vicious or mean)
- g. Barking Dog Alarms – are available at various stores (about \$100); picks up motion through wood, glass, stucco, cement, plaster; not does go through metal). Battery and/or electrical operation. Some also have remote sensors.

- **Radios**

- a. Leaving a radio on when you leave (or placing it on a timer) can be a good deterrent. It makes it sound like someone is home. Install it close to the front door where it can be heard from the outside.

- **Mailboxes**

- a. Never place outgoing mail in an unsecured mailbox. Take outgoing mail directly to the post office or to an official U.S. Postal Mailbox.
- b. When the mail is delivered to your mailbox, it should remain locked until you access it with a key.
- c. Do not display your name on your mailbox or anywhere outside your home.

- **Fire Safety**

- a. smoke detectors are required in every bedroom and hallway
- b. also recommended near furnace, water heater, washer/dryer

- c. mount one just outside of the kitchen area in case of a kitchen fire; if you mount it too close to the kitchen, you may have accidental activation from normal cooking procedures
- d. battery operated; check batteries monthly; change batteries when you change the clocks (spring and fall)
- e. replace smoke detectors when they get old; keep them clean per instructions
- f. have a fire extinguisher on each floor
- g. fire plan - Where do you meet outside if there is a fire??
- h. fire drill - Show children how to escape; staying low, escaping from windows, 2<sup>nd</sup> story escapes, etc.
- i. have a fire escape ladder in upstairs bedrooms
- j. don't go back inside a burning house - Let RFD do that!
- k. deadbolt issues - make sure you can get out!
- l. Carbon monoxide detectors are now required in each home

- **Vacation Security**

- a. An empty house is a tempting target for a burglar, so make your home look and sound occupied while you are away.
- b. Stop all deliveries or arrange for someone to pick up your mail, newspapers, and packages. NOTE: Canceling your mail or newspaper could tip off a dishonest mail or newspaper employee that you will be away, so it might be wise to have someone pick up the mail/paper while you are gone.
- c. Arrange for someone to mow your lawn and maintain the yard while you are away.
- d. Place your inside lights on timers so that they go on and off periodically during the night time hours.
- e. Have a radio on a timer so it can be heard outside your front door during daytime and evening hours (have it go off when you would normally go to bed)
- f. Hide your garbage cans out of sight. If your garbage cans are empty when everyone else's are full, it can be a sign that you are not at home.
- g. Turn the ringer on your telephone down low or off so that people outside your home will not hear the phone ringing go unanswered.
- h. When possible have a friend or family member park a car in your driveway occasionally so it looks like someone is still at home. You may also leave one of your own vehicles in the driveway.
- i. Leave your blinds/drapes in their normal position on second floor windows (closed on ground level so no one can look inside and view an empty home).
- j. Ask a trusted neighbor to watch the house while you are away. Leave an emergency contact number with them in case they should need to get in touch with you. Give them a key and your alarm access code in case they have to

make entry. You may want them to check the inside each day for problems such as broken pipes.

- **Vehicle Burglary and Vehicle Theft Prevention (Around the home)**
  - a. Always keep your vehicle locked
  - b. Whenever possible, park it in the garage. Once inside the garage, lock it and take the keys with you.
  - c. Never leave vehicle keys in an unsecured place in your home. If your home is burglarized, the burglar could find the keys and use them to steal your car. Keep unused keys in a home safe or lock box.
  - d. Don't leave valuables inside your car. Cell phones, stereos, computers, backpacks, purses, wallets, CD's/cassettes, tools, clothing, credit cards, or even a closed paper bag can attract a thief and cause him to force entry.
  - e. Remove your remote control garage door opener
  - f. Remove title, registration and personal documents from your vehicle. The law says you must carry your insurance and registration with you, so keep it in your wallet rather than your glove box.
  - g. Light up your driveway and front yard
  - h. Trim trees and bushes away from your driveway
  - i. Never leave your keys in the vehicle when it is unattended
  - j. Never start your car to let it warm up, and leave it unattended
  - k. Use anti-theft devices such as steering wheel locks, alarm systems, blinking lights, kill switches, Lo-Jack, etc.
  - l. Get a locking fuel cap to prevent siphoning and vandalism. If your car does get stolen, it may not allow the thief to go far because he cannot access the fuel tank to add more gas.

## **VI. OPERATION IDENTIFICATION**

- a. To help facilitate the return of stolen/lost property. The vast majority of valuable items recovered or seized by law enforcement go unclaimed by their rightful owners because the police cannot figure out who they belong to.
- b. OP ID can be a deterrent to criminals
- d. It is harder to sell stolen items that are engraved
- e. Provides a great "tool" for Police Officers to investigate when someone is contacted and found to be in possession of property that is marked.
- f. Engrave your California Driver's License Number or California ID Card on all valuables
- g. Do not use your social security number (Law enforcement cannot easily access this information, and it is not a number you should give out to anyone).
- h. Engrave the back of the item in a prominent place near the serial number.
- i. Take pictures and/or make a video tape of valuable items. This is especially important with items such as jewelry, coins, glassware, etc., that may be difficult or impossible to engrave.
- j. Make a list of valuable property (may use our special OP ID form)

- k. Record serial number, brand, model number, color, description, and value
- l. Store the inventory list in a bank safe deposit box and home safe
- m. You may also send a copy to your insurance agent. Note: Items of high value (i.e., jewelry, coins) may not be fully covered under normal insurance policies. You may need to get a special writer to include these items.
- n. Attach Operation Identification stickers to the doors/windows
- o. Engravers are available at RPD during regular business hours. Call 625-5416 to make an appointment to pick one up.
- p. You may also purchase one at a hardware or electronics store for about \$10
- q. If you wish to sell or give away an item that has been engraved, do not scratch off your Drivers License number. Instead, use an engraver to draw a single horizontal line through your number. Then engrave the new owner's number below your number. This allows law enforcement to check the chain of ownership.
- r. Note: It is against the law to deface a serial number or owner applied number in California, or to possess property with the numbers removed.
- s. Clothing and furs can be marked with special visible or invisible ink, or you may embroider the number on the material.
- t. The RPD works with local pawn shops. We receive records of items that are purchased and sold at these stores. These stores also obtain the identification and thumb prints of their customers (which the PD also receives). Law enforcement agencies may run serial numbers and owner applied numbers in our police computer systems. If we get a match on a piece of stolen property, we have a good chance of tracking down the thief.

NOT TO BE USED FOR PENDING OR PENDING SALE