

STOP, THIEF!

The FBI reports that a burglary is committed every 20 seconds, with nearly 1.6 million such crimes nationwide annually. Follow these tips to avoid burglary, especially if your house is listed for sale.



1. Maintain Your Property

Keep walkways clear and remove holiday decorations and fallen tree branches in a timely manner to signal that the home is occupied.



2. Assess Your Home's Vulnerability

Walk to the curb and face your house. Ask yourself, "How would I get in if I were locked out?" The first thing you think of is exactly how a thief will get in.



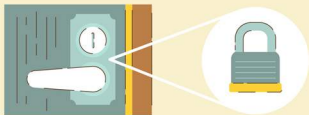
3. Respect the Power of Lighting

Invest in tools that make nighttime light automation easy, such as dusk-to-dawn adapters that go into existing light fixtures and motion detectors.



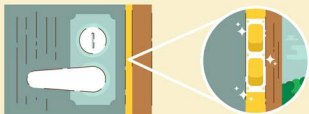
4. Use Technology to Make Your Home Look Occupied

Systems that remotely control lighting, music, and appliances such as a thermostat can help make it appear like people are home, even when they're not.



5. Yes, it Has to Be Said: Lock Your Doors

It's amazing how many people think they live in a safe-enough neighborhood not to have to lock their doors when they leave. In 30% of burglaries, the criminals access the home through an unlocked door or window.



6. Reinforce Your Locks

A good door lock is nothing without a solid frame. Invest in a solid door jam and strike plate first, and then invest in good locks.



7. Blare the Sirens

A burglar's biggest concern is witnesses to their crime. That's why an external siren is invaluable. Even if you don't have an alarm, it's not a bad idea to invest in fake security signs and post them near doors.