

Tips to Discourage Burglars

The association makes every effort to maintain a secure environment in our community, but there is only so much we're authorized to do. Unfortunately, illegal entries into homes in our area—and others—happen from time to time. Residents can do more to protect themselves and their property than the association can do. Here are a few common-sense suggestions for reducing your chances of being the target of burglary.

- ✓ Install double-cylinder, dead-bolt locks on your outside doors and include a reinforced strike plate to strengthen the doorframe.
- ✓ Lock all doors and windows no matter how briefly you'll be out of the house.
- ✓ Install bars or lock pins on sliding doors and windows. These are available at local hardware or discount stores. Some mechanisms allow you to lock a sliding window or door in a partially-open position so you can enjoy fresh air securely while you're at home. However, if you go out, close the window and lock it.
- ✓ That old trick of hiding a key somewhere outside your home is a bad idea. Burglars—or anyone who may have seen you hiding the key—will know where to find it. Instead, give a key to a neighbor or leave one with the association management office.
- ✓ "John, I've gone to pick up your sister. I'll be home at 3:30.—Mom" This note also means, "Burglar, this house will be unoccupied for 45 minutes. Help yourself." Don't ever leave notes like this.
- ✓ If you're going to be out of the house for a short time, leave a television or radio on to create a sense of activity and presence.
- ✓ If you're going to be away for a longer time, such as a vacation, take a few simple precautions to keep your home from looking empty. Ask a neighbor to collect your mail and keep the door and porch clear of delivery notices, newspapers and fliers. Pick up several electric timers at the local discount store, and use them to turn lights, a television or radios on and off at various times during the day and evening. Let your neighbors and the manager know how to reach you in case there's an emergency.
- ✓ Marking your valuable personal property won't prevent it from being stolen, but it will help you get it back if it is. Engrave your driver's license number on items in a hidden area. Check with the local fire department, police station or library to borrow an engraver. They're also available at large discount stores and are worth the investment if you have many items to mark. Photographing the item (and the engraved marking, if possible) will make it easier to retrieve your items from the police if they are recovered, and will aid in making an insurance claim if they aren't.

It doesn't take much to discourage a burglar. He succeeds on opportunity, and if your home doesn't offer a good opportunity, he'll move on to one that does.