



NOBLESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

## Neighborhood Crime Watch Program

RESIDENTIAL SECURITY INSPECTION

### Burglary / Theft Prevention for Your Residence

Every resident is charged with the responsibility of taking the necessary steps to protect themselves from becoming the next potential victim of burglary or theft. There are many ways in which citizens can improve their odds against victimization and we will discuss a wide array of them. However, a criminal will always strike at the weakest point that requires the least amount of effort, the least amount of time and with the best chance at being successful. There is no one single means by which to protect yourself as it will take an objective eye and open mind to evaluate several different areas of vulnerability within your home's current security level. Unfortunately, the days of being able to leave your front door unlocked is a thing of the past but it doesn't mean that we must lead a secluded life locked behind our fortress either. What it does mean is that we must be a little more cognizant of the little things that we can do that will make a tremendous difference in reducing our potential of being burglarized.

Burglary prevention involves five (5) concepts: deter, deny, delay, detect and deceive. An effective burglary prevention program is based upon appropriate action to implement these five concepts.

- Deter:** Subscribe to the Operation Identification (Operation I.D.) program and when completed, affix the decals to let potential burglars know that property items were inventoried and marked. Light accessible locations of the yard during nighttime hours.
- Deny:** Place valuables in a secure location, e.g., wall safe or security closet.



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317.776.6340 | 135 South 9th Street | Noblesville, IN 46060 | [www.CityofNoblesville.org](http://www.CityofNoblesville.org)

- Delay: Install key-locking latches on windows.
- Detect: Install an alarm system. Join a Neighborhood Crime Watch Program so the neighbors can help to watch each other's homes.
- Deceive: Place automatic timers on lights to simulate the home being occupied. Have neighbors pick up mail and other deliveries and mow the lawn to maintain a lived-in appearance.

These five (5) preventive concepts can also aid in apprehension. The longer the burglar is denied entry, the greater the chances for observation by neighbors and apprehension by law enforcement.

You cannot make a residence burglar-proof, but you can make the possibility of entry so difficult that the burglar will go elsewhere in search of an easier target. The more crime prevention steps you take, the greater your security.

### Protecting the Home's Interior

One of the first steps in protecting the contents inside your home is to participate in **Operation Identification (Operation I.D.) program**. Operation Identification is a nationally recognized and recommended method by which citizens individually mark and take inventory of all their valuables within their residence. The purpose behind this program is to place identifying numbers on your valuables if you are victimized by a burglar or theft. These specific markings will serve to identify your property should the police locate it and to deter criminals from the onset.

Often, criminals will look to sell the property that they net because of a burglary or theft and when potential buyers notice your individual markings, they may be less apt to buy the items. Pawn shops require identification from anyone wanting to pawn items and they will also list these markings if the perpetrator tries to pawn these items creating a link back to the potential suspect.

Using an inexpensive electric etching pencil or engraver, you can engrave your personal property with your driver's license number. Inscribe the number on one or two places on items such as laptop computers, television sets, stereo equipment, DVD players, guns, tools, etc. These numbers can be placed on the base or rear portion of the item without marring the appearance of the item.



Small items, such as jewelry which cannot be marked, should be photographed, or videotaped. Extremely valuable jewelry should be appraised, as well, by a reputable appraiser. Place a description and listing of the time on the back of the photograph.

Once you have marked your property, record it on the Noblesville Police Department's Operation Identification inventory sheet. Put a copy of the inventory in your safe or a safety deposit box. Also, save receipts from your more valuable items and keep them with the inventory list. If you have a burglary, fire or storm or any other kind of loss – this will help you to establish proof of ownership and value for filing an insurance claim.

Be sure to update your inventory at least annually and let any would-be burglars know that you have taken personal responsibility for all your valuable property contained within your home by displaying an Operation Identification sticker at your main entrance. These stickers are available through the Crime Prevention Manager at the Noblesville Police Department and will be supplied to homeowners after review of their list.

### **Join a Neighborhood Crime Watch Program**

The Noblesville Police Department is always searching for new communities to add to their list of established Crime Watch areas. The program is a mutual effort among neighbors aimed at reducing crime in their community at the grass roots level. It involves getting to know your neighbors and reporting suspicious activities to the police and then sharing that information with your neighbors to keep everyone informed.

Neighborhood Crime Watch is designed to reduce burglaries and other neighborhood crimes by requesting participation in the following manner:

- Know your neighborhood and communicate with the residents.
- Record license plate numbers and descriptions of suspicious persons and then contact the police.
- Be the eyes and ears of the police when they are not around.
- Bringing awareness to personal and home security issues through the police department.

When you are going to be away:

- Tell your neighbors and leave an emergency contact number with them.
- Leave a key with a trusted neighbor or family member.
- Arrange for pickup of mail and other deliveries.
- Have a neighborhood look after your lawn to maintain a lived-in appearance.
- Contact the Noblesville Police Department and complete a Vacation Courteous Check Sheet.



- Use timers to turn lights on and off at different times to present an occupied appearance.

Be suspicious of:

- That person you have never seen before.
- That person (young or old) selling candy, newspapers and/or magazine subscriptions.
- That person (young or old) taking a “shortcut” through your backyard.
- That repairman, delivery man or visitor at your neighbor’s door.
- The unfamiliar vehicle (car, truck or moving vehicle) in your neighbor’s drive.
- If you notice anything else that is suspicious, be a good neighbor and call the police.

### **Additional Means of Residential Prevention and Protection**

*Do Not Reward the Burglar Who Does Get In.* If, despite your precautions, a burglar does get into your home, do not give him a “bonus” of cash, or easily carried jewelry. Never keep large sums of money around the house. Keep valuable jewelry that you do not often use in a safe or safe deposit box or a security closet.

*Creating a Secondary Barrier or Security Closet.* A secondary barrier or security closet can be created as an additional safeguard. An existing closet can be used to store jewelry, furs, camera equipment, guns, silverware, and other valuables. For a security closet to be effective the door should be solid core and equipped with a single cylinder deadbolt lock. The hinges of the door should be pinned.

*Don’t Welcome Burglars by Telephone.* Burglars sometimes try to find out if anyone is home by telephoning your residence. If you get several suspicious “wrong Number” calls or “nobody-at-the-other-end” calls, report it to the police. Warn family members, especially children, not to give out information by phone – especially about who is home, who is out, how long anyone is expected to be out.

If you use an answering machine, do not indicate on the recording that you will be gone for a specific time. A more appropriate message is that you are unavailable at this time, and you will return the call as soon as possible.

*Insure Against Theft / Burglary.* A homeowner’s policy provides basic economic protection against burglary and other types of theft, regardless of whether you own a house or rent an apartment. Special policies designed for mobile homes owners and condominium unit owners serve the same purpose. If you do not already have such a policy, it is suggested you purchase one without delay. (Ask your insurance company if they offer any discounts for certain home security precautions such as i.e., install deadbolt locks, participate in Operation Identification, etc.)



Appearance of Occupancy. Maintaining an appearance of occupancy, even when your residence is vacant, is essential to thwarting burglary attempts. Timers which automatically regulate the interior lighting of a home can create a significant deception. Timers should be used while on vacation, when you are out to dinner or even during the day while you are at work.

One type of automatic timer has a 24-hour dial and allows you to set an on-and-off time to coincide with normal light usage in your home. These timers simply plug into the wall, and the lamp you want to use is plugged into the timer.

For the most realistic deception, several timers and lamps should be used to simulate occupancy. For instance, a radio and lamp in the living room might be on from 6:30 p.m. until 11:00 p.m.; at 11:00 p.m. a lamp might go on in the bathroom until 11:30 p.m.; then a bedroom lamp would be on from 11:30 to midnight as an example. This would indicate to anyone watching the house that it was occupied, and the residents were going to bed.

During the day, leave drapes and shades in their normal position – the way you have them when at home.

### **Ways in Which to Improve the Security of Doors**

You will find that there are many ways in which to improve the security of your home as it relates to the just the doors. Some are free, some are relatively inexpensive, and some can be a little costly. Some of them you will be able to do yourself while others will require the assistance of a private enterprise. Regardless of the cost or time associated with making the change(s), huge dividends can be accomplished by paying attention to the following suggestions.

Key Control. True security begins with key control. When you move into a home or apartment always have the locks rekeyed. You don't have to replace the lock itself, as re-keying the locks will render the previous keys useless. This procedure should also be followed if you lose your keys. Any licensed locksmith can change the tumblers in your outside door locks quickly and inexpensively.

Do not leave an "emergency" key under the door mat, on top of the doorframe or in any other "hiding spot" so well known to burglars.

Never attach any identifying features to your house or car keys. If the keys are lost or stolen you will have given a criminal everything, they need to know to find you including access to every lock that the keys go to.



Keep car keys and house keys separate. This way your house keys are never left in possession of a stranger when you have your car parked at a restaurant or parking lot.

*Exterior Doors.* Many residential doors feature hollow-core construction and poor locks, and other items, which will allow easy access to a residence. To attain maximum security, all exterior doors which lead into the residence (especially from the garage) should be metal-clad or of solid-core construction and at least 1-3/4 inches thick. The door frame should also be of solid construction, as well, and should be equipped with a proper strike plate. A screen or storm door offers additional protection only if it is kept locked.

*Doors with Windows.* The best protection is to avoid placing windows near any door or purchasing a door that has a window installed in it. In either one of these cases, access to the doors locking mechanisms is made available to anyone who simply breaks the glass on the window and reaches in.

*Door Viewers (Peepholes).* Rather than opening your door to a stranger – even with a chain lock attached – utilize a door viewer with a 180-degree lens. This device will allow you to see someone standing outside your door without opening it. If you have children old enough to be opening the door by themselves, the viewer should be placed at a level visible to the child.

*Deadbolt Locks.* A deadbolt can provide good home security when mounted to all exterior doors. When you turn the key or thumb turn with the knob, the lock mechanism slides a strong metal bolt from the door into the doorframe. When you buy a deadbolt lock, make sure:

- The bolt extends at least 1" from the edge of the door.
- The connecting screws that hold the lock together are on the inside of the door.
- The strike plate is attached to the doorframe with screws that measure at least 3' in length. The screws should penetrate through the doorframe to a structural member.
- The cylinder has a steel guard around the key section. The cylinder guard should be tapered or rotate around the key section to prevent wrenching if it is twisted.

Deadbolt locks cannot be slipped or easily pried. Deadbolt locks are only as good as the door and frame they are installed on. Double cylinder deadbolts, requiring a key from either side, create a substantial amount of concern especially if that door is to be used as a fire emergency exit. These types of locks are prohibited in many communities and those that do allow them often require that a key be left in the inside cylinder whenever the home is occupied.

*Key-in-the-Knob Locks.* For all key-in-the-knob locks, the addition of a deadbolt lock is highly recommended. Although these are common locking devices, they provide little security. This type of lock on an outside door is an invitation to even the most inexperienced burglar. These



locks can be forced by breaking off the knob and frequently they can be opened by prying or slipping a piece of plastic between the jam and bolt.

Locks for Double Doors. Double doors require an additional locking device. Many homes with double doors use half barrel slide bolts on the inactive door. These are weak and inadequate. Flush bolts installed at the top and bottom of the inactive door offer additional security since the intruder cannot get at these devices to tamper with them if the doors are locked. It is important that the bolts have at least one inch throw and that they protrude well into the top frame and threshold. The strike plates should be well secured with at least 3" brass wood screws.

Locks for Dutch Doors. Dutch doors can be secured by adding a deadbolt lock to both the lower and upper door. Minimal security may be achieved by adding a flush bolt to the upper door, securing it to the lower door. The flush bolt throw should be at least 1" and should protrude well into the lower section of the door.

Door Hinges. Many homes have doors, which open to the outside, exposing hinge pins. Despite your good strong locks, the burglar can simply remove the hinge pins and lift the entire door from the frame. This situation can be corrected in one of three ways:

- Have the door removed and the hinges remounted on the inside of the frame so that the door swings inward.
- Install a set of hinges with non-removable hinge pins.
- Install a locking pin in the existing hinge plate by doing the following:
  - Remove the center screws from the two plates of each hinge; both top and bottom.
  - Insert a "headless" screw, bolt, or nail into the doorjamb through the hole in the hinge plate. Leave ½ inch of the screw, bolt, or nail protruding.
  - Drill a hole ¾ inch deep through the opening in the opposite hinge plate on the door.

Once this is done, as the door closes the pin in the jamb will penetrate the hole in the door and the door will be held in position even if the hinge pins are removed.

Sliding Glass Doors. Most factory installed locking devices on patio doors are inadequate. They can be easily lifted off its tracks and removed. To secure sliding glass doors, drill at least a ¼ inch diameter hole that angles downward through the top channel and continues into the top portion of the sliding door frame when closed. By placing a solid metal pin or bolt into the hole the door will be held securely in place. If the children cannot reach the pin or if a hole cannot be drilled through the frame into the door, another method can be used. In the center of the door at floor level where the metal framework overlaps, drill a hole through the interior frame at a downward angle and into (but not through) the exterior framework. After the holes are drilled insert a metal pin or nail.



Screwing two or three number 8 or 10 sheet metal screws into the track above the sliding door provides added security.

***CAUTION:*** *When drilling holes exercise care so that drill pressure on the drill itself does not cause glass breakage.*

*Garage Doors.* The garage doors should always be closed and locked. Make sure that you treat the entrance door from the garage to your house the same as any other door. A burglar in your garage can work on your house door undetected – often using your own tools to do so! Standard locks on garage doors are easily pried. Make certain that each side of the garage door is secured with sliding bolts to prevent prying open a crawl space. If you have an older garage door opener, be aware that they are vulnerable to electronic access via scanning.

### **Ways in Which to Improve the Security of Windows**

*Sliding Windows.* Sliding windows – either metal, wood frame or vinyl – should be protected in the same way as a sliding glass door. Use the same supplementary locks or screws in the frame of the door. Screws installed in the track above the sliding window frame will prevent the window from being lifted out of the track.

*Double Hung Sash-Type Windows.* To secure double hung windows, drill a hole that angles slightly downward through a top corner of the bottom window into the bottom of the top window, on both sides. Then place an eyebolt or nail in the hole to prevent the window from being opened. Auxiliary latches may also be purchased.

*Casement Windows.* Casement windows generally open and close by means of a gear-operated handle and have a locking device to secure them to the center post. Some protection is afforded by removing the crank handle from the operating mechanism. Do not leave casement windows partially opened, as they can then be easily forced open further. The latch should close properly with the window tight. With the latch in a closed position, drill a small hole through the latch frame and handle. Insert a metal pin through the hole to lock the window.

*Louvered Windows.* Louvered windows have several strips of glass that are tilted open to allow ventilation. The glass is maneuvered with a rollout type handle or lever. Louvered windows are very easy to penetrate by breaking or removing one piece, then removing the remainder of the glass.

**Considerations:** Louvered windows are a high security risk, and the best recommendation is to have them replaced. If you have louvered windows, use a waterproof adhesive to secure



each individual slat into its track. Be careful when applying the adhesive, do not accidentally glue the window shut.

*Basement Windows.* Basement windows are one the most common points of entry for burglars. Special attention should be paid to securing them. Basement windows, often hidden by bushes or trees, provide burglars with an ideal place to work unobserved. Such windows should be replaced with Plexiglas or polycarbonate or reinforced with decorative security bars.

**Warning:** Caution should be used to assure that bars or gratings are not placed as to create a fire hazard. Bars and grating are not recommended for sleeping rooms. If they are used, however, they must have an inside mechanism that allows them to swing out in an emergency.

### Things to Consider with Padlocks

When selecting padlocks to secure your garage door, storage shed, fence gate or toolbox, do not economize. Low priced locks are made from low quality materials and are easily pried open or cut bolt cutters. Look for some of these features when purchasing a padlock:

- Double locking shackle at the toe and heel.
- Hardened steel shackle, the larger the diameter the better.
- Five-pin tumbler.
- Key retaining feature (prevents removal of the key when unlocked).
- A strong steel hasp should likewise be used with the padlock.

### Alarms

Residential burglar alarms are available from electrical and hardware dealers, as well as entire systems that may be leased or purchased from alarm companies. Prior to installing an alarm system, it is advisable to check with the City of Noblesville to learn about the alarm ordinance.

Most residential alarms emit a loud noise from a bell, siren, or other tone generator. An audible alarm on doors and windows can be effective deterrent to the amateur burglar. If you do install an audible alarm, make sure that your family and neighbors are informed about its function and that they are trained to call the police department when they hear the

alarm. Some systems also offer in combination with an audible alarm a visual alarm by way of a flashing, rotating or strobe light.



There are many types of alarms on the market. Secure the service of a company specializing in alarms systems for the best results. A local company specializing in burglar alarms systems may save you money on service calls. Get several estimates and then decide which Alarm Company and system will be best for your needs. An inexpensive system may create more problems than it is worth by sending false alarms. Remember to notify your neighbors that you have an alarm. Make sure they are aware of the alarm's sound and that it is loud enough to be heard in their home.

An alarm system should include:

- A failsafe battery backup.
- Fire sensing capability (ionization sensors are among the best).
- Readout ability to check the working of the system.
- Horn sounding device installed in the attic through the vent.

It is not recommended that you have a dialer system call the police department. During a major disaster, this type of alarm will completely block incoming phone lines at the police department.

Do not depend only upon an alarm to protect you and your family...be sure to use proper locking devices and apply some of the suggested practices contained within.

## Landscaping and Exterior Lighting

*Landscaping Considerations.* Improperly planned landscaping can create an environment that's conducive to crime. Landscaping design and safety requirements can differ greatly from site to site. Even though, there are several basics that speak to crime prevention and personal/property security. Creating natural visibility in an environment is paramount to creating a safe place. Line of sight visibility to and from parking lots, homes, walkways, businesses, and common areas removes the security of concealment from the criminal. Here are some basic rules to follow:

### **Trees and shrubs should not:**

- Be planted next to buildings where they can provide second story access.
- Be planted next to lighting sources where, after time, they can obscure the light output.
- Be planted next to entrances or alcoves where they can reduce visibility.

### **Trees and shrubs should:**



- Be maintained at certain heights and levels to provide for proper line of sight visibility.
- Trees – canopy should be trimmed at 7 feet.
- Shrubs - no higher than 36 inches.

### **Concealment Areas:**

Landscaping can create a multitude of concealment or entrapment sites. These are areas where individuals can hide or entrap a victim. Planting around hidden alcoves and corners is discouraged for this reason. If plants are present in these areas, particular attention should be paid to the height requirements outlined above.

### **Defense Plants:**

Landscaping can be used as a tool for crime prevention as well. Use defense plants (thorny plants or plants with needles) as barriers to vulnerable access points, such as below bedroom windows, or along fence lines to prevent access.

**WARNING:** Don't let trees and shrubs become overgrown where they impede walkways, lighting sources and creates concealment or entrapment zones. Keep landscaping well-groomed and you'll be creating a safer environment.

Lighting. Exterior lighting is extremely important in residential security. Each exterior doorway should be lights to prevent a burglar from concealing his activities. Yards and windows should be lighted to prevent concealment. Ornamental porch, yard post lamps and garage coach lights are a means of eliminating night blind spots.

Yard and entrance lights can be equipped with sensors which will turn on at dusk and off at dawn.

- Motion lighting: Is activated by motion through a sensor mounted on the light fixture. The sensor can be wide or narrow angled depending on your needs. They can be set to activate at dusk and stay on for a predetermined amount of time (typically 3 – 5 minutes). Make sure the sensor is set high enough to scan the upper body area of an average height adult or your lights will go off for every stray cat in the neighborhood.
- Photocell: Lights that come on automatically at dusk and shuts off at dawn. This is great for areas where you want constant illumination without having to worry about timers.

### **Dogs**

There is controversy on the value of a dog to warn of an intruder. While a dog may or may not bark at an intruder, the mere presence of the dog may discourage the burglar. Under no circumstances should you depend on the dog as a sure method of an automatic burglar alarm.



Who to Contact for Additional Information:

If you are interested in participating in Operation Identification or if you simply have additional questions, please feel free to contact the Noblesville Police Department's Program Manager.

Sergeant Greg Kehl  
Neighborhood Crime Watch Program Manager  
135 South 9th Street, Noblesville, Indiana 46060  
(317) 776 - 6340  
[gkehl@noblesville.in.us](mailto:gkehl@noblesville.in.us)

