



Spotsylvania County Sheriff's Office
PO Box 124 Spotsylvania, VA 22553
Crime Prevention Unit, Deputy Frank Corona (540)507-7177



As I have always preached, we should be able to leave our homes open. We should be able to leave our garage doors up and unsecured. We should be able to leave our windows open and allow the fresh air to circulate. We should live in a world that would allow us to be "Worry Free" about such things. Unfortunately, that is not the world we live in. Many out there have no problem stealing your property. Therefore, do we sit back and allow this to occur. Or do we take action, show the American spirit, and resolve that says "YOU CANNOT JUST COME IN AND MAKE ME A VICTIM, I WILL MAKE IT DIFFICULT ON YOU!"

Home Security Checklist

Use this as a guide as you check your home for safety measures. Boxes marked "No" indicate areas where you could take action to improve your home security. These are just some steps that you can take to decrease the likelihood that you or your home is targeted for a crime. I will also add why this is important and some recommendations.

Exterior of Home:

Yes/ No

Is your home well maintained?

(Cleanliness, trash picked up, neat, no bikes or toys in disarray, grass maintained, structure not falling apart, etc...A home that is well maintained, tells the criminal that the residents that reside in this home care about their home and will protect it)

Are address numbers visible from the street?

(Burglars seek targets that allow any window of opportunity and look for signs that may reduce their chance of being apprehended. Seconds may make the difference between being caught and getting away with a crime. If Deputies cannot see your address at first, it may cause a slight delay. 4 to 6 inches is the recommended minimum for the number size. The numbers must be visible at night)



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Street or other lighting working?

(Lights are extremely important to security of a home. The criminal does not want to get caught. Criminals want to operate in an environment where they will not be seen. Hence, lighting provides observation of criminal activity. Additional lighting should be added in dark areas not typically covered by streetlights. When adding lighting it is important to place the lighting where it will have the most affect. It needs to be in areas that allow homeowners, neighbors, Deputies patrolling the area, to observe the area. It does no good to have lighting in areas that cannot be observed, this only assist criminals in their activities. It is recommended that areas that cannot be observed, to add motion sensor lights. Motion lights may frighten the criminals, and will inform the homeowner that activity is occurring in an area where no one should be. Pay attention to the glare of your lights, lighting needs to be positioned correctly. If lighting is horizontal and away from your home, it will temporarily blind observation from patrol deputies. If the lighting is horizontal towards your home it will blind you from observing what is occurring from inside your home. Lighting of entrances, especially when the resident is away, is extremely important. The light not only illuminates the major location of most burglaries to passerby but also ensures the resident that no intruder is lurking nearby. It also provides the resident reaction time to leave and call the Sheriff's Office if they discover the door ajar or possible signs of forced entry)

Are all shrubs near the house less than 3 feet in height?

(Tall shrubbery near the home offers quick and easy concealment for burglars)

Do border shrubs block view from the street?

(Once again, you do not want obstructions from Deputies patrolling the area. You can allow for Natural Surveillance through proper landscaping techniques)

Is tree canopy trimmed up to a height of 6 feet from the ground?

(It is recommended that all trees be trimmed up to a height of 6 to 8 feet to afford visible surveillance and to discourage use of trees as concealment)



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Are all fences of see-through construction? (Not privacy fencing)

(Fencing is typically used to define the property boundary and afford a sense of privacy. Unfortunately, by providing privacy for yourself you also provide privacy for the burglar to work undetected. You should use semi privacy, picket, corral, chain link, or wrought iron fencing.)

EXTERIOR DOOR **YES / NO**

Are your doors kept locked throughout the day and night?

(This is all about opportunity, a locked door will delay a criminal from entering)

Are your doors of solid hardwood or metal-clad?

(Hollow core doors offer little protection and should not be used on any doors that provide an entry into your home. Door should be a minimum of 1 ¾ inch thickness)

Does your door feature wide-angle peepholes at heights everyone can use?

(It is critical that we all be able to see who is attempting to make entry into our home. Wide-angle peepholes allows for observation of a larger area. If you do not know the person, do not open your door)

Are there glass panels on or near your doors?

(This is purely decorative in nature, if you do have glass panels than ensure that they are reinforced in some way so that they cannot be shattered.)



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Do all entryways have a working, keyed entry lock and sturdy deadbolt lock installed into the frame of the door?

(A good quality deadbolt is recommended for all exterior doors. The lock should have a 1-inch case hardened bolt and, when properly installed, should completely engage into the strike plate, or the lock is not secure. There are numerous locking systems in the market, research and request from locksmiths should provide the type of system needed based on your security needs)

Are all strike plates secured with minimal 2 1/2- 3 inch screws?

(A door kicked or forced will give at its weakest point. If a proper deadbolt and door are used than the weak area is typically the strike plate. Install a high security strike plate mounted with a minimum of 2 1/2 inches screw.)

Are doors hinged from the inside of the home or protected from being removed?

(Exposed unsecured hinges make it extremely easy for the criminal to remove and make entry)

WINDOWS AND SLIDING GLASS DOORS **YES / NO**

Are all sliding doors secured with a Charley Bar or similar device?

(Sliding doors need reinforcement. Unaltered sliding doors are easily lifted off its frame. A dowel rod or metal bar should be placed in the track behind the slider to prevent easy sliding of the door. Although this only offers a little protection and does not strengthen the top of the door, which might tilt. A commercially offered device commonly referred to as a Charley Bar, that operates on the same premise, preventing the door from being opened, but mounts midway the door is a better solution. There are several other alternatives in the market that can assist in securing sliding doors. All this information is available on the internet or through a security specialist)





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Are all windows secured with a keyed lock or other lock and pinned?

(It is recommended that all ground level windows be secured with a quality key lock (Always ensure that key is located near the window, in case of an emergency). In addition, the window may be reinforced by drilling at a downward angle through the window frame of the first window and partially through the second on double hung windows. Care must be taken to clear the glass that is inside the framing. A nail or metal pin may then be inserted into the hole to create extra security.)

Are all the windows locked to include second story windows?

(Provides an opportunity for easy entry)

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS **YES / NO**

Do you routinely keep garages closed and locked?

(This provides another entry into your home. Treat all doors that go from garage to your homes just as you would all other exterior doors. If you leave the garage door open when not in use, you are allowing anyone to take inventory of what you have. Therefore, they may decide what is worth attaining by breaking into your garage later)

Are all sheds and tools kept secured?

(We just need to use an old saying that I learned in the military, "Gear adrift is a gift," Hence, if they have the opportunity to steal it, they will.)

Do you have an alarm system?

(Alarms are just another layer of security in your toolbox. If you have the means to acquire an alarm and service, ensure that you get the right system for your home. To many people purchase alarms with motion sensors and they have pets. If not positioned correctly, your pets will set off the Alarm. After so many alarm calls, eventually everyone develops the "Cry Wolf" syndrome. Law Enforcement is aware that they have been to that home so many times for false alarms. Neighbors start considering the alarm a nuisance and no longer an emergency. Alarms must be maintained and insist from the Alarm Company that it works as claimed)



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Do you have an inventory list of all your valuables?

(It is highly recommended that all property be marked (do not use your social security number). Take inventory of all your valuables and electronics. Write down the serial numbers or individual markings of all your property. Take pictures of your property. Once complete, make duplicate copies. Keep one in the safe, one in a safety deposit box or a relatives home. If you are ever burglarized, you can produce this information to your insurance company and to the Sheriff's Office. Usually without a confession, it becomes difficult to arrest and prosecute someone for stealing your property unless we can prove (in a court of law), that the property belongs to you. There will be no debate about that if we can provide photos and serial numbers)

When purchasing items, do you leave large boxes outside your residence?

(You are simply informing the burglar that you have some new valuable items. It is recommended that you break the boxes down, and keep them in doors until the trash collection day.)

When you leave for several days, do you ensure the home looks lived in?

(Burglars look for certain telling signs that the home is a safe target. Signs such as overflowing mailboxes, trash that is not put out with others in the neighborhood, and newspapers piling up, give the burglar all the indication that they need to determine that you are away for an extended period. It is best that you have a trusted neighbor collect the items for you, if that is not possible than notify the post office, and newspaper delivery person that you would like you service suspended for a temporary period.)

When a solicitor comes to your door, do you ask for their permit?

A reputable solicitor does not mind showing their permits. There have been reports of burglars obtaining fake business cards. They knock on a door, if someone answers, they will ask if their services are needed. Usually it is a service that they know you will not need so they say thank you and leave you a card. They do that in order to not raise your suspicion. However, they are looking for the homes where the residents are out. They will check doorknobs, windows, and vulnerable points of entry. If you feel that the solicitor is not who he says he is, and he cannot produce a permit, call the Sheriff's Office (540)582-7155. You may be helping a neighbor)

Reference: [American Crime Prevention Institute, Crime Prevention The Law Enforcement Officer's Practical Guide (Richard L. Arrington), NCPA, VCPA, Spotsylvania County Sheriff's Office]