

# How Secure is Your Home?

## About this guide:

This is intended for residents to use as a guideline in evaluating how secure their home is, and to offer suggestions that may improve their security. Although no one specific security measure can guarantee that your home will not be the target of a crime, taking preventative actions can deter would-be predators from striking your home. It is recommended that you strive to provide “Yes” answers to as many of the security questions as possible listed below.

## Neighborhood Security

Have you met and become acquainted with the neighbors who live on all sides of your residence?

Have you talked to your neighbors about mutual neighborhood security?

Do you tell your neighbor when you are going on vacation or your home is unoccupied for an extended period of time?

Do you belong to a neighborhood watch program?

Is there effective street lighting in your neighborhood?

## Home Exterior

Is your house number easily visible from the street, with numbers at least 4” high?

If there is a street curb in front of your home, are your house numbers painted on the curb in black letters 4-6” high on a white background?

If your home has a mailbox near the street, are your house numbers on the mailbox at least 3” high?



Dense landscaping concealing entry

Are shrubs, bushes and other plant growth that are within 6 feet of any home sidewalks, driveways, doors or gates maintained at a height of not more than 2 feet?

Are shrubs, bushes and other plant growth that are between 6’ and 12’ from any home sidewalks, driveways, doors or gates maintained at a height of not more than 3 feet?

Are trees trimmed so that lower branches are at least 6 feet off the ground?

Are trees located or trimmed so that they cannot be used to gain access to an upper level of the home?

Are thorny plants used as ground cover along fences and under windows of the home?

Has decorative stone or rock been used as ground cover near the home so that it makes noise when someone walks on it?

Has fencing, paving, landscaping or some other comparable means been used to identify when a person transcends from public to private property?

If there is a fence around the home or property, are the gates routinely locked?

Do family members routinely secure items of value such as bicycles, lawn mowers, ladders, etc., at night or when the home is not occupied?

Are all entryways, porches and walkways to the residence well lit?

Are all sides of the residence protected by security lighting that is located high out of reach (under the eaves of the house preferably) and is vandal resistant?

Are exterior lights controlled by photocell (versus interior switches)?

Is motion detection lighting used on the exterior of the home?

Are telephone lines entering the home high enough that they cannot be easily reached and cut?

If there are detached buildings on the property (garage, storage building, barn, etc..) are the doors and windows securely locked?



Motion detection light

## **Garage**

Is the garage door kept closed when not in use?

Is the garage door locked at all times (even when someone is at home)?



Interior garage door lock

When you are on vacation or your home is unoccupied for an extended period of time, is the overhead track-operated garage door disconnected from inside the garage (so that it cannot be opened with an electronic remote control device)?

When you are on vacation or your home is unoccupied for an extended period of time, is a case-hardened padlock inserted in a hole drilled in the overhead door track to prevent the door from being opened?

Are the doors leading into the garage or from the garage into the home either solid wood or metal core and do they have a good quality deadbolt lock with a high security strike plate?

Are garage windows pinned to deny easy access?

Are electronic garage door openers removed from vehicles parked outside of the garage?

Are keys removed from motor vehicles when they are parked inside the garage?

## Doors

Are exterior or entrance doors either solid core or steel?

Are door locks that can be opened from the inside at least 40" from glass?

For exterior doors with glazing within 40" of the door lock, is break-resistant polycarbonate glazing material used?

Do exterior or entrance doors fit tightly within the door jam?

Do exterior doors have wide angle (180 degree) door viewers?



Is glass 40" from lock?



Is polycarbonate glazing used?

Are exterior door strike plates secured with screws at least 3" long?

If exterior doors swing outward and have exposed hinge pins, have removable pins been replaced with non-removable pins?

Have screws been installed in the tracks of sliding glass doors?

Are locking bars (or "Charlie Bars") used to secure sliding glass doors?

## Locks

Are deadbolt locks with at least a 1" throw installed on all exterior or entrance doors?

Was the residence re-keyed when you moved in?

Are the door locks in good working order?

Do personal key rings contain no type of home or personal identification on them?



1" throw on deadbolt

## **Windows**



Glass block window  
with vent

Have double hung windows been pinned?

Do basement windows have security bars, grills or auxiliary locks or have glass block windows been installed?

Are window air conditioners anchored and protected by steel grillwork to prevent removal from the outside?

Have crank handles been removed from casement windows?

## **Security Alarm System**

Does your home have an electronic intrusion alarm system?

Was the alarm installed by an experienced, reputable, and reliable alarm installation company?

Is your home security alarm monitored by a professional alarm monitoring company?

If the alarm system is more than five years old, has the equipment been evaluated for upgrading or updating?

Have all responsible members of your household been trained how to properly arm and disarm the alarm system?

Does the alarm system have a back-up power source (battery)?



Alarm key pad



UL rated burglary-resistant safe

## **Miscellaneous Home Security Measures**

Does your home have a security closet for the storage of firearms, silver, coin collections, etc., with either load-bearing or reinforced walls and a high security lock?

Do you have a UL rated burglary resistant safe secured in your home?

Have you participated in Operation Identification and engraved your items of value?

Have valuable papers such as stocks and bonds certificates, mortgages, property titles and deeds, birth, marriage and death certificates, passports, income tax records, etc., been placed in a rented safe deposit box?

Have you participated in Operation Identification and engraved items of value?

Have you made a complete inventory of household goods and valuables (ideally with a photo or videotape of the items)?

Are all exterior doors locked at night or when the home is unoccupied?

Are children taught not to open the door to strangers?

Are accessible openings to the home such as skylights, crawl spaces, vents, etc., protected by a strong, well-fitting cover and high quality lock?



Photo of jewelry

### **Vacation Checklist**



Snow Covered Walkway

Are home deliveries stopped and arrangements made for a trusted neighbor or a family member to pick up mail, newspapers and packages?

Are trusted neighbors asked to watch your home when you are away on vacation?

If your homeowner association or Neighborhood Watch organization has a home vacation program, are they notified when you are on vacation?

Are lights and a radio connected to timers that turn them on and off at appropriate times?

Are arrangements made to have the lawn mowed or snow removed during your vacation?

Are window shades and blinds left in their normal position while you are on vacation?

Is your vacation address and/or telephone number left with a trusted neighbor or family member so that you can be reached in the event of an emergency?



Overflowing Mailbox

## **One Last Thing...**

Security does not end on your doorstep. Homeowners must also pay close attention to their parked vehicles and other personal items on their property. One of the most prevalent crimes in Ann Arbor is Larceny from Automobile, better known as “car hopping” among today’s youth.



Items left in vehicle

Larceny from Automobile complaints are on the rise and generally occur late at night when you are sleeping.

Target vehicles are usually left unlocked, making it easy for would-be thieves to enter and steal contents from parked vehicles. As with most crimes, we cannot prevent criminals from having the desire to steal, but we can offer a few easy tips to deter a thief from breaking into your vehicle.

Park your vehicle inside your garage whenever possible. If you do not have a garage, park your vehicle in the driveway close to your home.

Lock your vehicle doors and roll the windows up.

Install quality lighting to the outside of your home (motion sensors or dusk to dawn lighting).

Never leave valuables inside your vehicle including: laptop computers, electronic devices including games and personal music devices, tools, wallets, purses, brief cases, cell phones, golf clubs and other sporting goods or equipment.

**For further information call:**

**Crime Prevention Specialist and Crime Analyst, Adele El-Ayoubi at (734) 794-6933**

**OR**

**Police Service Specialist/Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, Deborah Cauffiel**

**at (734) 794-6930 (extension 49346)**

**Ann Arbor Police Department**