

# **Top 50 Home Safety and Security Tips:**

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" according to Ben Franklin. When it comes to protecting your family, your home and assets from criminal intrusion, it ranks highly on everyone's list of priorities. In addition to having a monitored home security/alarm system from **Security Consultant Pros**, this information should help increase your understanding:

## **Burglary facts:**

- ❖ According to DPS statistics, in 2011 there were a total of 1,064,477 violent crimes in Texas (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny theft and motor vehicle theft).
- ❖ The most common threat to our home is burglary and every 16 seconds a burglary occurs somewhere in the United States, per FBI statistics.
- ❖ Most burglaries occur during the daytime when people are at work or school.
- ❖ Most perpetrators are males under age 25 looking for cash or small items easily converted to cash (favorite items include cash, jewelry, guns, watches, laptop computers, gaming systems, smart phones, mp3 players and other small electronic devices).
- ❖ Burglars generally choose homes with the easiest access, the greatest amount of cover or best escape routes.
- ❖ Burglars will bypass a home if it requires too much effort, too much skill or if they feel they will be caught. To disguise themselves, they can even dress like a lawn guy and carry a rake, etc. They do their best not to look like crooks.
- ❖ Most burglars enter via the front, back or garage doors and many times through unlocked doors or windows.
- ❖ Experienced burglars know the garage door is usually the weakest point of entry, followed by the back door. These doors also provide the greatest amount of cover.
- ❖ Burglars will look inside your car for keys, garage door openers or valuables, so keep locked even if inside the garage. If possible, frost garage windows so burglars can't tell your car is gone.
- ❖ A professional burglar looks for ways to disable security systems, so go with a wireless alarm system not dependent on phone lines to call the monitoring station. Don't make it easy for them by not setting your alarm.

## **Inside or Outside Home:**

- ❖ Secure your home. Close and lock your doors, windows, garage doors and gates even if you are only going out for a short while.
- ❖ Change the locks and tumblers when you buy a new home or if you lose your keys. All exterior doors should have quality locks with deadbolts that resist twisting, prying or lock-picking.
- ❖ Use solid doors and door frames for all entry points. Use blocking and anti-lift devices on sliding doors.
- ❖ Don't leave spare keys under doormats or outside your home.
- ❖ Don't leave notes for delivery people on your doors.
- ❖ Keep plants and hedges trimmed so they don't offer a hiding place for criminals.
- ❖ Put a lock on your fuse box or external power source.
- ❖ Use timers to switch lights and radios on and off when you aren't home so it appears occupied at all times.
- ❖ Avoid installing doggy doors that can allow in small intruders.
- ❖ Alarm decals on windows and doors are an excellent deterrent.
- ❖ Never leave windows open (especially at night while you are asleep). Window locks should be installed and used on all windows.
- ❖ Burglars are extremely reluctant to break glass, as this sound carries further than almost any other noise and elicits a response from almost everyone who hears it. (Just don't depend on this because they may not react if they hear only one loud sound.) Glass break detectors will detect the frequency and vibration of broken glass and will trigger an alarm to the monitoring company.
- ❖ Exterior lighting is definitely a deterrent to criminals who don't want to be identified. Make sure the front and rear of your home are well lit.
- ❖ Motion sensors can be installed on the interior or exterior of the home and can even turn on lights automatically when someone approaches your home. (Pets, insects and other similar sources will not set off passive infrared devices, generating fewer false alarms).
- ❖ Video cameras are an excellent deterrent. Recorded data (from a break in) is very incriminating evidence.

## More Tips:

- ❖ Get to know your neighbors and be each other's watchful eyes.
- ❖ Check out vendors who will be allowed inside your home before you give them access.
- ❖ Don't allow people asking to use your phone inside your home. Instead, make the call for them.
- ❖ Contact law enforcement to find out the crime history for the neighborhood before you buy a home in that area.
- ❖ Discuss safe family living patterns and have safety meetings.
- ❖ Never give the impression you are home alone if strangers call or come to the door. Educate your kids on this topic.
- ❖ Vary your routine to avoid predictable behaviors.
- ❖ Have the local authorities patrol your street regularly when you are away. Most will do this upon request.
- ❖ Turn down the ringer so an unanswered ringing phone doesn't alert intruders you are away.
- ❖ Have a neighbor or friend pick up your paper and mail while you are away and if possible, park a car in the driveway.
- ❖ Barking dogs are good deterrents because burglars don't like to have attention drawn to their presence. Nosy neighbors are another good deterrent.
- ❖ Have an exit strategy for you and your children.
- ❖ Lock up your valuables in a home safe or safety deposit box and keep them out of sight whenever possible. Don't advertise your assets. Burglars often drive and walk through neighborhoods and look in windows with open blinds to search for valuables, signs of vulnerability and if their victims are home prior to picking out a target.
- ❖ Do not discuss your travel plans or talk publicly about new purchases or your valuables around unknown people. Don't announce your vacation on Facebook. It's easier than you think to look up your address.
- ❖ Use peepholes before opening the door and make sure to see identification if you don't recognize the person. Don't ever open the door to someone you don't know.
- ❖ Do not exit your vehicle to enter your home if you are followed or if someone you don't recognize is lurking around.
- ❖ Report suspicious behavior or persons to authorities.
- ❖ If you come home and find a door or window open or signs of forced entry, don't go in. Get away from the home and call the police.
- ❖ Change your alarm codes if you have given them out to people who no longer live there or are unwelcomed in the home.
- ❖ Most police agencies recommend that you engrave your drivers' license (not social security number) on televisions, stereos, computers and small electronic appliances so they can locate you if your stolen items are recovered.
- ❖ Photograph your valuables around your home, capturing the make, model, and serial numbers. This is very important for proof when filing insurance claims. Leave a copy with a neighbor or friend.
- ❖ Drive through the neighborhood to assess general conditions, lighting, etc. before purchasing a new home. Also be sure to ask yourself: Is the area clean? Graffiti-free? Are homes in good repair?
- ❖ Make sure your home is identified with your address on the curb to make it easily visible for police to locate if your alarm should go off.
- ❖ Additional keypads and panic keychains with distress buttons can also be life-saving in the event of a break in or medical emergency.
- ❖ Complacency is the most serious obstacle to personal safety. Be alert. Don't assume you are always safe. Avoid dangerous situations and always trust your instincts.

Life is valuable, protect it! Bottom line, you really should be alarmed!

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