

BURGLARY BASICS – Home and Business

Recently the Borough and some nearby towns have been struck by a rash of burglaries. Haddonfield Police Chief John Banning has made some recommendations to help residents and businesses protect themselves from this type of crime. The Chief recommends that you don't tempt a thief; he states "most burglaries are crimes of opportunity." Burglars will usually take the path of least resistance.

How to Prevent a Home Burglary

Single family homes with limited lighting and restricted views from neighbors are a burglar's prime target." The following are his recommendations to help secure your home.

- Invest in solid doors and good quality locks on doors and windows. This includes on all sliding glass doors as well. Make it not only difficult but also time consuming for a burglar to gain entry.
- Whenever you go outside, lock the door and take the key with you, even if you are just stepping next door or out mowing the back yard.
- Don't put valuables where they can be seen from the window, especially items that can be easily carried.
- Be sure your garage door or patio can be secured. Do not leave it open when you are away; an empty garage broadcasts your absence.
- When you aren't home, use a timer set to turn interior lights on and off at varying intervals as though your home was still occupied.
- Don't keep large amounts of cash or really valuable jewelry around the house.
- If someone comes to your door asking to use the telephone, make the call yourself. Don't invite them in.
- Don't hide a spare key under the door mat or under a flower pot. Thieves know all the good hiding places.
- Plant thorny bushes under all windows. Trim back any trees or shrubs near doors and windows to eliminate hiding places for would-be thieves.
- Invest in a good security system and use it, along with motion sensor lights installed out of reach
- Don't leave ladders outside. Keep any tools that could be used to break in your home safely locked away in a garage or shed.
- Always double check doors at night and lock all windows.

If Your Home Is Broken Into:

If you come home to find an unexplained open/broken window or door:

- Do not enter - the perpetrator may still be inside.
- Use a neighbor's phone or cell phone to call police (911).
- Do not touch anything or clean up until the police have inspected for evidence.
- Write down the license plate numbers of any suspicious vehicles.

- Note the descriptions of any suspicious persons.

Finally, remember to be a good neighbor. If you observe suspicious or unusual activities report them immediately to the Police (429-3000).

How to Prevent a Business Burglary

Business owners are urged to take the following steps to help prevent break-ins:

- Evaluate all external doors and locks (including locks on windows). Upgrade them in necessary.
- Arrange window displays so passers-by (including police officers) can see through them into the store.
- Remove valuable merchandise from window displays at night.
- Display your more valuable merchandise near the cash register, rather than near windows.
- Turn at least one interior light on at night.
- Ensure that alarm systems are activated at night. If there is no alarm system, consider installing one.
- Remove all cash (or notes and checks, at least) from your register each night. Leave the register's cash drawer open.
- Least person out...Check that all outside doors are completely closed and locked.
- Discuss these and other security issues with your employees, especially new ones.

If you have questions or concerns about this topic, or any topic concerning the Police Department, please do not hesitate to call the Police Department at 856-429-4700, ext. 250 or email Chief Banning at jbanning@haddonfield-nj.gov.

In an emergency always dial 9-1-1.