

Home Security Checklist

Lighting:

- Every door has a bright (at least 60 watts) working light to illuminate visitors.
- There are no dark areas around the house, garage, or yard at night that would hide prowlers.
- Spotlights/floodlights are high enough on the house that they can not be removed without a ladder, and are used appropriately to ensure effective illumination.
- Outdoor lights are on at dusk and are on a timer or photocell, or are motion sensitive.
- A light is left on in the house on a regular basis, whether you are home or not, in at least two rooms. (You might want to use timers.)

Windows:

- Every window has a working key lock or is securely pinned.
- Windows are always locked, even when they are opened a few inches for ventilation.
- Bushes and trees have been trimmed so that windows are clearly visible.
- Every window has an inside covering (curtain, shade, blind) which is closed at night so that it is not possible to tell if anyone is home.

Doors:

- All doors are locked at night and every time you leave the house – even if it's just for a few minutes.
- Exterior doors are solid hardwood or metal-clad.
- Doors feature wide-angle peepholes at a height everyone can use.
- Have the locks changed whenever you move to a new home or apartment.
- Any glass panels in or near doors are reinforced so they cannot be shattered.
- All entryways have a working, keyed entry lock and sturdy deadbolt lock.
- Spare keys are kept with a trusted neighbor, not under a doormat or planter, on a ledge, or in a mailbox.
- Bushes and trees are trimmed so that anyone standing in a doorway is clearly visible.
- Storm/screen doors are locked whenever not in use.
- If you need to unlock your door from the inside with a key, be sure it is readily accessible in an emergency.
- The door between the garage and the house is kept locked when not at home.
- The sliding door has a strong, working key lock, and is locked at night and every time you leave the house.
- A dowel or a pin has been installed to secure the sliding glass door to prevent it from being shoved aside or lifted off the track.

- Never open the door without knowing who is there. Always ask for identification from unexpected visitors (such as employees from PECO, or PAWC). Solicitors must carry a permit- ask to see it. If they do not have one, notify the police immediately.

Security Alarms:

- Alarm system is used at night, and every time you leave the house, even when you leave for a few minutes.
- Alarm is connected to a central monitoring system.
- Siren is located on the inside as well as the outside of the house.
- All windows should be wired. (All levels; at least the ones that are readily accessible.)
- Glass break sensors have been installed.
- Motion detectors are installed and used whenever you leave the house.
- Basement windows have been secured. (Do not use bars – especially if you have children, as this could prevent a fast escape in the event of a fire.)
- Signs and or stickers notify people that there is an alarm system in use. (Stickers should be placed in every window.)
- A list of people that know your code (and password or temporary password in case they accidentally set it off) are properly set up in your security company's system.
- Be sure everyone residing in the house knows how to use the alarm system, the panic button, and knows the codes and passwords.
- The system is frequently tested. Call the security company (and closest neighbors) and test the system, checking all zones on a periodic basis.
- Notify your alarm company whenever you travel, even for an overnight trip.

Outdoor valuables/Personal Property:

- Gate latches, garage doors, and shed doors are all locked with high-security, laminated padlocks, and are locked after every use.
- Grills, lawn mowers, and other valuables are stored in a locked garage or shed, or if left out in the open, are hidden from view with a tarp and securely locked to a stationary point.
- Cars are kept locked when left in the driveway (and all valuables have been removed).
- Garage door openers left in the car are stored out of sight.
- Do not put your name on your mailbox. (Criminals use it to address you by name when they want access to your home, or they can look up your phone number and call to see if you are there.)
- Bicycles are kept locked, even if left for just a minute.
- Outdoor furniture, ladders, and other objects, which can be used to climb on, are locked up when you are not home. (Burglars use them to gain entry through the second floor windows.)
- Firearms are stored unloaded and locked in storage boxes and secured with trigger guard locks.

- Valuable items, such as televisions, stereo equipment, and computers have been inscribed with an engraver (or black light marker) with an identification mark.
- A home inventory list has been kept up-to-date and includes pictures, and a complete copy is kept somewhere outside the home.

Travel Tips:

- If you belong to a Neighborhood Watch, notify your Block Captain whenever you go out of town.
- Have someone pick up your paper and mail.
- Ask a neighbor to watch for packages.
- Have someone open and close your shades every morning and evening.
- Leave forwarding numbers in case of an emergency.
- Provide your security company with the names of the people who might be entering your house.
- Provide the person who will be checking your house with your password (or a temporary one) in case the alarm is accidentally set off.
- If no one will be in your house while you are away, have the alarm company send the police immediately if the alarm is activated.
- Keep a radio or television on (loud enough to be heard outside) when you are away from the house.
- Use timers to turn your inside lights on and off at different times, in different rooms.
- Do not let your answering machine fill up with messages. This can be an obvious signal to would-be burglars. Also, never leave a greeting on the machine stating you are away from home.
- Have someone tend your yard (plow the snow or mow the lawn) while you are away.

Additional Tips:

- Leave a list of family, work, and emergency numbers with your neighbors in case of an emergency.
- Protect your jewelry and important papers by putting them in a safe place. This could be a safe deposit box at the bank, a safe, or another good hiding place.
- Be sure your children know where to go or what to do in case you are not home on time. They should not be entering an empty house.
- Have your house number well identified and clearly visible. The number should be well lit, large enough to be seen from the street, and should not be obstructed from view. This could save valuable minutes in an emergency.
- Do not leave your cars in the street. It makes it easier for your neighbors and police to notice suspicious vehicles.
- Have emergency numbers (911, police, neighbors, etc.) set up on your speed dial. Teach your kids how and when to use them.
- If you have a dog (and even if you don't), put up **Beware of Dog** signs. The goal is to deter burglars as much as possible.
- Get to know your neighbors. Develop a system of surveillance for each other's property.

- Be suspicious: report unusual or suspicious behavior/activity to the police. When reporting, make sure you have as much information as possible, and remember to call immediately; any delay will give the criminal a chance to get away.