



# Shelby County Sheriff's Office

MARK H. LUTTRELL, JR. - SHERIFF

## Crime Awareness Publication



## Home Burglary Crime Prevention Tips

### Level One Prevention Tips for Home Burglaries

#### “Call police if you see anything suspicious”

- “Know how to respond to a burglary”.
  - ✓ Leave immediately if you see your home has been burglarized (*the burglar may still be there*)
  - ✓ Call the police immediately
  - ✓ Do not touch anything until police have secured your home (*your fingerprint over the burglar's make its unreadable*)
  - ✓ If you wake up and find a burglar in your room, pretend to be asleep until it is safe
- **If you see any strange or suspicious activity, call the police immediately!!!** Don't hesitate to call. If the activity was legitimate, DO NOT be embarrassed or concerned about calling. If an individual/company/agency caused concern on your part about your or your neighbors safety, then they need to improve their business practices..
- **You just did the right thing**, whether or not criminal activity was occurring. The offender(s) will not be back with this type of citizen involvement. Remember they want easy targets and don't want to be caught. Retaliation is very rare and you don't have to identify yourself or location when calling police.

### Level Two Prevention Tips for Home Burglaries

#### “Make your home look occupied when no one is home”

- Leave lights on when you go out. If you are going to be away for a length of time, connect some lamps to automatic timers to turn them on in the evening and off during the day. When leaving on trips, leave a light on in the bathroom. In the bedroom, attach a lamp and radio to a 24-hour electric timer set to go on at dusk and off at your bedtime. Automatic timers are pretty cheap these days.
- Leave a radio on an all talk show station and a little louder than normal. The conversation might lead an offender to believe the home is occupied.
- Close bedroom drapes or blinds. Keep your curtains and blinds partly open in other areas of your house. If you're just out for the evening, leave some lights on and close the curtains.
- Have someone pick up newspapers and mail. When you are going to be away, tell trusted neighbors and ask them to watch your property. Tell neighbors to call police if they notice anything suspicious. Make sure your neighbors have an emergency contact



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number for you. In our mobile society, almost everyone has a cell phone on which they can be reached. If not, provide a number for a close relative or friend who has information on how to contact you.

- Arrange for your lawn to be mowed if you are going away for an extended time. Perhaps a neighbor can maintain your yard.
- Ask a neighbor to put out your trash and recycle bins (even if they're empty) and bring them in again.
- If away for an extended period of time, and no cars will be left in the driveway, ask a neighbor or relative to park an infrequently used vehicle in your driveway, or a second vehicle if they have more than one.

### Level Three Prevention Tips for Home Burglaries

#### **“Target harden your home and property”**

- The most significant thing you can do is mark your valuables with an engraver with your state driver license number or any other unique number that can be traced back to you. Marking your property serves as a deterrent to would-be burglars and it helps police in identifying and returning stolen property. Most police departments have engravers to loan. Call the SCSO to get one.
- Along with engraving and marking your property, keep an inventory form with serial numbers and take pictures and video of all your valuables to aid in making an insurance claim and the recovery of your property. You can get an inventory form at [http://www.shelby-sheriff.org/documents/home\\_inventory.doc](http://www.shelby-sheriff.org/documents/home_inventory.doc). Store it in a safe and retrievable place in the event you are a victim of burglary.
- Don't hide keys in the mailbox, under the door mat or in a plant.
- Lock all outside doors and windows before you leave the house or go to bed. Even if it is for a short time, lock your doors, and set your alarm if you have one.
- Keep your garage door, fence gates and sheds/storage buildings closed and locked. Regrettably, this should be done even when you are at home. Side gates allow thieves easy access to the back of your house, away and out of sight from the street. Not only are these areas full of valuable and easy-to-steal tools, but they usually contain implements that thieves can use to break into your home. Always lock doors between your house and garage.
- All exterior doors should be solid and have deadbolt locks.
- Install motion activated lights at all exterior doors. Install motion activated lights in carports and any other areas of your home that are not easily viewed by your neighbors. Make sure that exterior lights are mounted out of reach, so that burglars can't easily unscrew bulbs.
- Don't keep valuables in the bedroom. (Burglars go there first.)
- Shrubbery should not obscure windows or doors from being seen by neighbors or police officers on patrol. Bushes and plants that grow too tall can be places for burglars to hide behind while trying to break into your home. Keep shrubbery trimmed to ensure that your doors and windows are visible.



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- Secure all sliding doors and windows. For sliding doors cut a broom handle to the length of the bottom track so that the window or door will not slide open when forced. Also, drill one hole through both casings and sliding window and insert a nail or pin. To prevent wooden sash windows from being pried open, drill a downward sloping hole into the top of the bottom window through and into the bottom of the top window and insert a pin or nail. To prevent aluminum sash windows from being broken into, purchase a track lock that blocks the window track.
- Store your guns for sport and the ammunition for them in different rooms. This does not include guns for home protection, but they should be well secured from children and guests in your home. Guns for sport should be kept in a safe or locked cabinets designed for them when possible.
- Valuable jewelry belongs in a safe or safe deposit box.

### Level Four Prevention Tips for Home Burglaries

#### **“Other Best Practices and Tips”**

- Most police departments provide a vacation watch service. If provided, the officer assigned to your beat will attempt to check your home at least once during his or her tour of duty. Most all police agencies in Shelby County provide this service.
- Most police departments will provide a free security survey. Call the non emergency number of your police department to see if they provide this service.
- Organize a neighborhood watch to protect your neighborhood. An alert community is a safe community. Assistance is available from your local police department and the SCSO.
- Ask a neighbor to keep an eye on your home.
- Arrange for a house sitter to live in your home if you'll be away for an extended period.
- Put alarm and/or beware of dog signs in conspicuous places even if you have neither. They are cheap and available at most home center and hardware stores.
- Don't leave a message on your answering machine saying you've gone away, and turn the volume down on your home phone. Better still, forward your home phone number to your mobile phone.
- Don't leave the box of your new TV or computer outside the house. Cut boxes into pieces and place them into your trash bin.
- Keep small amounts of cash in your home.
- Display your house number conspicuously and have it well illuminated. This will help police and emergency personnel find your home quickly.
- Enroll in a Citizen's Academy provided by police.