

Residential Burglary Prevention

Simple and practical recommendations to
reduce your risks of home burglary



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Residential Burglaries



Residential burglaries

Residential burglary is the crime most frequently reported to Tasmania Police. Burglary and theft from residential premises impose a significant cost upon the community. The experience of being burgled can be a very traumatic one for victims who may be left feeling angry, violated and unsafe in their own home.

Most burglaries occur during daylight hours, when homes are often vacant. However, it is essential to ensure that your home is secure at all times, day and night.

Reducing burglary

The risk of burglary can be reduced. Research has shown that security devices such as locks and burglar alarms are effective in reducing the risk of burglary, and that the risk of burglary is lower in neighbourhoods where the residents have a strong sense of community and look out for each other.

Many burglaries occur when an offender discovers an open window or unlocked door, and takes the opportunity to enter the home and steal cash or other items of value. Making sure that your home and other buildings (e.g. garage/garden shed) are always secure is an effective way to reduce the likelihood that opportunistic burglars will see your home as an easy target.

A number of strategies which may help to prevent your home being burgled are suggested in this brochure. In addition to security measures, simple behavioural changes, such as leaving a light on when you go out to make your house look occupied, can be an effective deterrent to would-be burglars.

Repeat burglaries

Unfortunately, once you have been burgled there is a very real possibility that you could be burgled again, and this could occur within a relatively short period of time. The same burglar/s who committed the initial burglary, or their associate/s, may be responsible for the repeat burglary.

Reasons for a repeat burglary can include the following:

- > Burglars know there are additional items of value in a home and view it as an easy target because they cannot see any obvious improvements in the security of the home;
- > Burglars may try to burgle a home again within 4-6 weeks of the first burglary because they think that the goods previously stolen will have been replaced through insurance;
- > Burglars may return because they now have a buyer for some particular item they saw on the first occasion;
- > Burglars return to burgle other residential buildings (e.g. if the garden shed was broken into on the first occasion, the home may be burgled on a return visit); and
- > Burglars acting independently of each other may consider the house to be an attractive target on separate occasions. For example a house which is often empty, has poor security and is located in an isolated area is likely to be an attractive target to most burglars.

If you have been burgled recently and you think it is possible that your residence may be vulnerable to a repeat burglary for any of the reasons outlined above, it is strongly recommended that you address any security shortfalls that may leave your home and garage/shed vulnerable to burglary.

Project Samaritan



Residential burglary support

The aim of Project Samaritan is to prevent residential burglary and repeat victimisation by offering support and crime prevention advice to victims of burglary.

Police officers attending residential burglaries offer to conduct a Security Assessment of the burgled residence, and provide victims with a Resident's Information Kit containing burglary prevention advice.

In selected areas, a follow-up referral service to Neighbourhood Watch is available. Project Samaritan involves a partnership between Tasmania Police, Neighbourhood Watch and the Crime Prevention and Community Safety Council.



Home Safety



General Tips

to Help Prevent Burglary



Fire safety

While it is important to make your home secure to reduce the risk of burglary, you must be careful not to compromise your fire safety. Make sure that you are able to leave your home quickly in the event of a fire by having door and window locks “keyed alike”. One key should open all doors, and another key open all windows.

Deadlocks that can be opened from the inside without a key are strongly recommended. If your deadlocks require a key to open them from inside, leave the keys in the locks when you are at home.

Smoke alarms should be installed in all bedrooms and between living and sleeping accommodation.

Designing to prevent crime in new homes

If you are building a new home, talk to your architect and/or builder about ways to reduce the opportunities for burglary. Features such as solid core doors, window locks, improved exterior lighting (including sensor lights), an alarm system, and good quality deadlocks on doors will help make your new home more secure.



Neighbours

Neighbours are your first line of defence against crime. Get to know them and ask them to keep an eye on your home when you are out or on holiday. Offer to do the same for them. Consider joining Neighbourhood Watch.

Home number

Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street so that police and emergency services can find your home quickly. If your home is situated on a corner the number should face the street named in your address.

Don't leave messages on your door

Messages left on doors tell burglars you are out. Request your friends and relatives not to leave notes on your door and pay them the same courtesy. Parcels sitting on the doorstep can also let a burglar know that no one is home. Arrange for a neighbour to collect goods if you plan to have them delivered while you are out.

Keys

- > Never 'hide' your home key under a doormat, in the meter box, in a pot plant or any other obvious place. Instead, leave a spare key with a relative or trusted neighbour;
- > Don't mark your keys with your full name or address. If you lose them a prospective burglar who finds them will be able to identify your home. Instead, mark your keys with your initials and date of birth;
- > Don't give keys to tradespeople regardless of how long they will be working in your home. Instead, arrange for a neighbour to let them in and lock up after them when they leave;
- > If you move into a new home it may be advisable to change the exterior locks because you never know who might have a duplicate key; and
- > If your home has been broken into and your keys (or spares) are stolen you should change the cylinders in the locks or fit additional locks.

Ladders and tools

Make sure that you don't leave ladders and tools lying around. Burglars may use them to break into your home. Store household equipment in a locked garage or shed. Ask your neighbours to do the same. If you don't have a shed or garage then padlock your ladder to something secure. Avoid leaving loose bricks, rocks or other objects around that could be used to break windows.

The garden

Don't give burglars the opportunity to hide in your garden and break into your home unnoticed. Make sure that your windows and doors are not obscured by trees and shrubs. External lighting (particularly sensor lights) is also effective.

Going out at night

When going out at night, leave a light and the TV or radio switched on to make your home appear occupied. Automatic timer devices can be used to switch the lights or TV on after dark.

Keep doors locked when working outside

If you are gardening, working in the back yard, or an isolated part of your home, make sure your home is secure. Homes have been burgled while the owners are present and working out of sight.

Telephone directory

List only your initials and surname in the telephone directory and on mail boxes. Also consider listing your suburb only, rather than your full address. Burglars sometimes try to identify homes which are unoccupied by making phone calls to homes in the area they wish to target.

Pet doors

Some pet doors are large enough to enable a small person to enter your home. Pet doors should be small enough to permit only a cat or small dog to gain entry. Make sure it is not possible to manipulate the inside locks by reaching through a pet door.

Garbage

Empty garbage bins lying on streets can be a signal to a burglar that no one is home. Where a wheelie bin is required by your local council, arrange for a neighbour to bring it in after the rubbish is collected. When your wheelie bin is not in use, lock it in a garage or shed, or chain it up to prevent it being used by a burglar to reach a window.

Funeral and wedding notices

Funeral and wedding notices containing an address can tell potential burglars when and where to strike. Avoid the use of addresses in classified notices.

Cash and valuables

Keep cash and highly valuable items such as jewellery out of easy reach and out of sight. Consider purchasing a quality home safe if you require your valuables to be within reach at all times. Alternatively, use a safety deposit box at a bank for especially valuable items.

Electrical goods packaging

After purchasing new electrical goods, don't leave the empty boxes and cartons (packaging) outside with your normal rubbish, particularly for popular items like TVs, DVDs, Stereos and PlayStations. Dispose of the packaging in some other way (by taking it straight to the rubbish tip or storing it somewhere until you can dispose of it at the tip). The presence of electrical goods packaging outside your home can signal to potential burglars that you have some new, highly desirable goods in your home.

Intruder in your home

If you hear an intruder in your home - **do not** confront the offender and risk injury. Concentrate on staying safe. If there is no risk of immediate confrontation, phone the police and then try to get out of the home as quickly as possible. If you have a mobile phone, wait until you are safely outside and then phone the police.



If you are outside and see signs of a burglary, **do not** enter as the burglar may still be present. Go to a neighbour's home and call the police. Wait with your neighbour until the police arrive. Try to record the descriptions of any suspects or suspicious vehicles.

Phone

- > If you have a touch phone, key in the following numbers so that they can be dialled by pressing one button:
 1. 131 444 (police attendance for non-urgent matters);
 2. 000 (emergencies only);
 3. Neighbour, family or close friend (for support and assistance in the event that you are burgled);
- > Consider a telephone extension connection in your bedroom; and
- > Avoid leaving messages on your answering machine that may indicate you live alone or that no one is home.

Garage

An empty garage usually means no one is home so keep your garage doors closed when you go out in the car.

Gates and fences

Gates and fences mark the boundaries of your property and should be kept secure and well maintained at all times. When you are out or on holiday, lock your gate/s to make it more difficult for burglars to gain access to your home.

Door knocking

One of the most common ways burglars check to see whether a house is occupied is by knocking on the door. If someone answers the door a burglar may claim to be looking for someone or ask for a glass of water. If you become aware of any suspicious door knocking in your neighbourhood contact the police.

Vacant properties

Burglars target houses which are vacant, as well as those which are occupied. Property such as hot water cylinders, stoves, fittings and heaters (e.g. wood heaters, panel heaters) may be targeted in burglaries of vacant properties. If you have a house that will be left vacant for any significant period of time, make sure that it is checked regularly and kept secure.

Holidays

A home left empty for a long period of time is a prime target for burglars. When you go on holidays, try to make your home appear occupied and reduce the risk of burglary by:

- > Making sure your home and garage/shed are secure. Check all windows and doors are locked;
- > Cancelling milk and paper deliveries. Arrange for your mail to be collected by a friend or neighbour, or have it held or redirected;
- > Arranging for a neighbour, friend or relative to remove junk mail and mow your lawn;
- > Turning down your telephone so burglars can't hear it ringing for a long time unanswered. Consider having your phone diverted to a friend or relative or to your mobile while you are away (ask your phone service provider about the cost of this service);
- > Informing local police and a trusted neighbour of your absence and leaving a contact name and number;
- > Having a light and the TV or radio connected to an automatic timer set to switch on at night;
- > Locking away all tools, ladders and anything else that could be used to gain entry to your home, garage or shed;
- > Leaving a key with a relative or trusted neighbour and asking him/her to enter your home while you are away to check on your home and make sure that it stays secure; and
- > Asking a friend or relative to house-sit for you while you are away.

Security Measures



Doors

The external doors of your home should be of solid core construction and fitted with deadlocks. Install deadlocks that can be opened from the inside without a key. Deadlocks should also be “keyed alike” so that one key will open all the doors.

A good quality security door on your external doors assists with ventilation and is a barrier for unknown callers and burglars. Keep your security doors locked at all times, even when you are home.

Fit a double-sided locking handle and patio door bolts to all sliding doors. A snug-fitting block of wood placed in the lower rack of the sliding door can also make it more difficult for burglars to slide the door open far enough to gain entry.

A door viewer (peephole) will give you a wide angle view of the person on the other side of the door. Remember to check first and ask for identification before opening the door. If someone comes to your door seeking help, have them wait outside with the door closed while you make the emergency call for them.

The inactive leaf of a set of double doors (french doors) should be fitted with concealed lever push bolts, or preferably, key-operated locks. The other leaf can be fitted with a deadlock/deadbolt and used as a normal door.

A common method of gaining entry is to smash the glass window in a door (or next to the door) to unlock the door. Deadlocks can help prevent a burglar from gaining entry via this method, provided that the deadlock is engaged and the key is not left in the lock.

Windows

All windows should be fitted with quality keyed window locks unless the windows are grilled. Have all locks “keyed alike” so that one key will open all windows. Windows should be secured so that they cannot be lifted from their tracks. If replacing glass, consider using other materials which are harder to break or penetrate.

If you want to leave your windows open, consider installing aesthetically pleasing, solidly constructed aluminium or steel window security grilles. If security grilles are placed on windows, ensure that some grilles are hinged so that you are able to exit in an emergency.

If you have an older style house which has a louvre window in a bathroom or toilet, for example, consider replacing the window or fitting bars or grilles. Burglars find it very easy to remove the slats and gain entry via a louvre window.

Dogs

Research based on interviews with burglars suggests that dogs can help to reduce the risk of burglary. Some breeds of dog are more of a deterrent than others, but generally burglars do not like barking dogs, regardless of the size or breed of the dog. Unlike other security measures, dogs require care and attention (e.g. feeding, grooming and exercise) and may not be suitable for your household. Excessive barking can also be a concern for neighbours.



Security Alarms

Alarms should not be a substitute for good physical security but rather an addition to it.

Obtaining more than one quote when purchasing a security alarm will help to ensure you are getting the best system for your particular requirements.

There are several alarm components available, such as:

- > Movement detectors which react to movement and/or heat can be placed in strategic locations around your home;
- > Magnetic Reed Switches - electro-mechanical devices which are activated when the electronic circuit is broken; and
- > Duress or panic assistance in the form of a fixed button, coded pad pin alert, or a portable device connected to an alarm.

A good alarm should:

- > Include 24-hour battery backup;
- > Comply with Australian Standards 2201;
- > Have two tamper-resistant sirens, one inside and one outside;
- > Have a user-friendly code pad and control box;
- > Be installed by a reputable company that has technicians available every day throughout the year; and
- > Have a 12 month warranty on components and installation as a minimum.

No alarms are directly connected to a police station. An alarm monitoring security company may be relied upon to ensure an effective response (notifying the police if necessary) to the alarm. Alternatively, you can monitor your alarm yourself using your mobile phone, or ask a neighbour, friend or relative to monitor it.

Some burglars know how to disable an alarm by cutting the phone and/or power lines. Good quality alarms which have a battery back-up and rely on a mobile phone connection rather than a land line may be more resistant to alarm tampering.

If you have an audible alarm, try to make sure that the alarm box is out of easy reach so that a potential burglar will find it difficult to disable the siren.

External Lighting

Good external security lighting can be a very effective deterrent to many burglars, as this increases the likelihood that they will be seen and identified.

Security lighting should be installed around the perimeter of your home, particularly over entry/exit points. Lights should be housed within vandal-resistant containers and mounted to restrict tampering.

Security lights should be connected to a time switch, heat or motion-sensing devices to enable the lights to be automatically activated/deactivated at pre-determined times.



Property Marking



Property marking

Engraving or marking your property with a UV pen clearly identifies you as the owner of the property.

Marking your property may deter some burglars because they will find it more difficult to dispose of the goods. Having your property marked will also assist police to return it to you if it is stolen and subsequently recovered.

Property inventory

A detailed inventory should be kept of all your property. Record the serial numbers, makes, purchase date, models, colour and size of your property.

Keep the inventory in a safe place, making sure to update it when new items of property are obtained.

Taking digital photographs of your property may assist police in the identification and recovery of items.

Operation Identification

“Operation Identification” is a Neighbourhood Watch project designed to discourage the theft of valuables from your home.

This is achieved by householders placing an identifying mark on appropriate items of value that could be stolen.

To participate, contact your Neighbourhood Watch Zone Leader for further details. Your Zone Leader may have an engraver you can borrow and will advise you as to the use of engraving and alternative methods of property marking.

What you should mark

All types of personal property are vulnerable to theft. The following items should be marked. Check off each item on the list after you have marked them:

Inside the home:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Televisions | <input type="checkbox"/> Video/DVD player |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MP3 Player/iPod | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio/CD player |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Microwaves | <input type="checkbox"/> Cameras |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen appliances | <input type="checkbox"/> CDs and DVDs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sporting goods | <input type="checkbox"/> Stereos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Musical instruments | <input type="checkbox"/> PlayStations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Clocks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hot water cylinders | <input type="checkbox"/> Heaters |

Outside:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Power tools | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawn mower |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trailers | <input type="checkbox"/> Chainsaws |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garden tools | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welding equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Horse floats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water pumps | <input type="checkbox"/> Rotary hoe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tool boxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Slasher |

In the Car:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radio/CD | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile telephones |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speakers | <input type="checkbox"/> Mag wheels |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tools | <input type="checkbox"/> Tool box |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battery | |

How to mark your property

1. Engraving

This method leaves a visible and permanent mark. Engravers are available for purchase from hardware stores or it may be possible to borrow one from your nearest Neighbourhood Watch Group.

Seek operating advice before using an engraver. Not all items are suitable for engraving.

2. UV Pen

A UV pen can be used to mark your property. Although the mark is permanent it is only visible with a blue light. This may be available from your Neighbourhood Watch Group.

3. Photo/video record

Items which are not suitable for property marking should be photographed or video-taped next to a tape measure to assist in determining their size. Such items include:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jewellery | <input type="checkbox"/> Furs etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watches | <input type="checkbox"/> Antiques |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Silverware | <input type="checkbox"/> Paintings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collectables | <input type="checkbox"/> Furniture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stamp and coin collections | |

What code to use

Mark your property with your driver's licence number preceded by the letter "T" (for Tasmania). This will enable your property be traced, even in another State.

If you don't have a driver's licence, use the driver's licence number of a relative or close friend. Alternatively, mark your property with a code comprising your initials, date of birth and letter "T" (for Tasmania). For example:

John Richard Smith
Date of birth: **01/02/65**
His personal code is **JRS010265T**

If you have any of your marked property stolen, make sure that you advise Tasmania Police which code you have used.

Home Security Assessment



Use this quick checklist to review your home security.

	Y	N
Is your home number clearly visible from the street?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are your doors and windows clearly visible from the street?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have automatic light timers or sensor activated lights?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you leave lights on when you go out to make your home look occupied?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are your external doors solid core?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have quality screen doors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have door and window locks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are your door and window locks keyed alike?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are your louvre windows fitted with bars or grilles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your property engraved or marked for identification?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you secure all gates?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your garage/shed locked when not in use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have smoke alarms in all bedrooms and between living and sleeping accommodation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you keyed in emergency numbers on your telephone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a dog?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you have a security alarm, is it always used and serviced regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered NO to many of these questions it is strongly recommended that you review your home security needs.

Neighbourhood Watch

What & Where Is Neighbourhood Watch?

Neighbourhood Watch is a community-based crime prevention program. It is aimed at minimising the incidence of preventable crime, especially burglary, within a defined area. It operates throughout Tasmania within local communities affected by crime and where there is also a demonstrated desire to introduce the program. It ensures maximum protection and assistance in the fight against crime. Many areas in Tasmania have already established Neighbourhood Watch.

Why is it needed?

In order to decrease the incidence of crime Tasmania Police need to develop cooperative partnerships with individuals and community groups, such as Neighbourhood Watch.

How Does it Start?

The level of interest amongst residents is canvassed and a public meeting is called. Volunteers are invited to assist with the implementation of the Program. An area of approximately 400 - 700 residences is defined. From the volunteers, an Area Coordinator is elected who is responsible for liaison and information exchange between Police and residents. Zone Leaders are selected and are responsible for fostering cooperation between the residents in their zones, administration of committees and liaison with the Area and Police Coordinators.

What is Involved?

Residents in Neighbourhood Watch areas are educated in crime prevention and through four basic steps become involved in an active way by: -

1. Participating in Operation Identification - the marking of valuable household items, such as a television or stereo, with their driver's licence number preceded by the letter "T" for Tasmania.
2. Informing residents of the incidence of crime in their area on a monthly basis and advising how to identify and report criminal activity.
3. Increasing residents' knowledge of practical, personal and household security measures.
4. Using sign-posting in areas where Neighbourhood Watch operates as a deterrent to criminal intrusion.

Neighbourhood Watch depends on a commitment of cooperation between the community and Police but more importantly between neighbours themselves.



TASMANIA POLICE AND THE COMMUNITY WORKING TOGETHER

For further information contact your Community Policing Officer:

Hobart	(03) 6230 2225
Launceston	(03) 6336 3998
Burnie	(03) 6434 5286
Bellerive	(03) 6230 2725
Glenorchy	(03) 6230 2751
State Coordinator	(03) 6230 2174

Or your nearest Police Station.



Victims of Crime Service

Victims of Crime Service

The Victims of Crime Service assists anyone who has suffered because the law has been broken. This can include the victim, members of the victim's family, friends or associates.

The Service assists victims in all aspects of the impact of a crime and aims to ensure the needs and rights of a victim are heard and acted upon by government and the community.

The service provides personalised assistance with a minimum of formality and respects the clients' ability to determine their own needs and solutions. Victims of Crime Service promotes the Charter of Victims Rights and helps people regain control of their lives.



What the Victims of Crime Service Offers

- > Personal support information and access to counselling 24 hours a day;
- > Referral to appropriate personal and community services;
- > Information regarding the Criminal Justice System including:
 - Court processes;
 - Progress of police enquires;
 - Charges;
 - Outcome of prosecution;
 - Impending parole or release from custody;
 - Support for people attending court;
 - Assistance with Victim Impact Statements;
 - Information regarding the rights of victims; and
 - Information and assistance with Criminal Injuries Compensation.

For further information please contact:

Victims of Crime Service

Phone toll free 1300 300 238 (all hours)

Hobart (03) 6228 7628

Launceston (03) 6334 1665

Devonport (03) 6424 9377

Burnie (03) 6434 6471

For further information about
Residential Burglary Prevention contact:

Crime Prevention and
Community Safety Council
(03) 6230 2884

OR

District Community Policing Services
Hobart (03) 6230 2225
Glenorchy (03) 6230 2751
Burnie (03) 6434 5286
Bellerive (03) 6230 2725
Launceston (03) 6336 3998

OR

State Community Policing Services
(03) 6230 2178

OR

Non-urgent Police Assistance
131 444



In providing these suggestions for improving your home security, Tasmania Police nor any of its representatives, make any representation or guarantee that implementation of these suggestions will prevent your home being burgled.