

# SAFE

# HAVEN

HOME SECURITY

STEVEN BRYANT





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction: The Times We Live In</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Surprising Facts about Burglary and Home Invasion .....	1
<b>Chapter 1: Your First Line of Defense</b> .....	<b>4</b>
The Perimeter of Your Yard .....	4
Are You Providing Thieves with Cover? .....	9
Putting the Fear of God into Would-Be Thieves .....	15
<b>Chapter 2: The Second Line Of Defense</b> .....	<b>18</b>
The Basics of Home Security .....	19
Make It Look Like You're Always Home .....	19
Special Considerations for Children and Seniors .....	28
Senior Citizens .....	30
Creating Safe Rooms within Your Home .....	31
For Apartment and Condo Owners .....	33
<b>Chapter 3: Understanding Security Systems</b> .....	<b>36</b>
Traditional Security Systems .....	36
DIY High-Tech Security Systems .....	39
DIY Primitive Security Systems .....	41
The Security of Your Security System: Is Your Smart Home Smart? .....	43
<b>Chapter 4: Home Invasion Training and Awareness</b> .....	<b>45</b>
Home Invasion Training Drills .....	45
Designated Safe Areas .....	47

**Chapter 5: Preparing for Special Situations ..... 49**

Parties ..... 49  
Garage Sales ..... 50  
Craigslist Sales ..... 51  
Working with Contractors ..... 52  
Social Unrest ..... 53

**Chapter 6: Supplies and Solutions ..... 54**

Alarm/Security Companies ..... 54  
All Types of Locks ..... 55  
Ballistic Film ..... 55  
Exterior Doors ..... 55  
Conclusion ..... 55  
Works Cited ..... 56



## INTRODUCTION

# THE TIMES WE LIVE IN

**B**eyond the walls, windows, and doors of your home is an increasingly dangerous world. It is crucial that we know our neighbors, our friends, and our communities. Knowing this, one true fact remains, 3 out of 4 homes in the U.S. will be broken into within the next 20 years. What is more surprising is that majority of the burglars reside in close proximity to their target areas and 38% of all robberies are committed with guns.

The information in this book is crucial to help you understand how your home, your family – really everything you cherish – don't end up as a mere statistic. On average, a home is burglarized every 13 second, with 5,400 occurring every single day in this great country of ours. Which is why this information is so vital and timely. We live in this dangerous world, and you must take steps to protect your family, your belongings and yourself.

### **Surprising Facts about Burglary and Home Invasion**

Home invasions and burglaries happen when you least expect them, in areas you would least suspect. Don't take comfort in thinking that the baseball bat securely stowed away under your bed is enough. You can never be too prepared when it comes to home invasions and burglaries. Here are some surprising facts that should illustrate to you just how crucial it is that you take home security very seriously:



- **Time:** Chances are that you think most home invasions take place at night, under the guise of night. While that's the picture popularized by Hollywood, the truth is very different. Most break-ins occur between the hours of 10 AM and 3 PM when you're at work and your kids are at school.

- **Duration:** It is a common assumption that it takes a long time for a burglar to rob a home of all its valuables. However, that's not the case. In most instances, it takes just 10 minutes for criminals to break in, find the items they want, and then make their swift getaway.

- **Picking Locks:** The image of a thief picking the lock on your front door is popular, but not what usually happens. In fact, 30% of burglars

actually enter the home through an unlocked door or window and 34% of burglars enter through the front door. Over 60% of robberies involve the front door being kicked in or otherwise forcibly opened.

- **Areas of the Home Under Threat:** You might think that your entertainment room would be a thief's prime target. This is not true. In most cases, thieves make their way straight to the master bedroom, where they know you keep most of your valuables. Almost anything can be targeted, from jewelry to weapons. The entertainment room is further down the list.

- **Location of Thieves:** According to the FBI's statistics, most thieves actually live near their victims – more often within a two-mile radius. This means that they have the opportunity to observe your routine and take note of when you're away from home to make their job easier. There's a good chance that you've seen the person who will rob your home around town at some point.

- **The Police Won't Get Your Stuff Back:** It's good to have faith in our men and women in blue, but the truth of the matter is that most home invasions/burglaries are never solved. In fact, a mere 13% of

burglars are ever caught. This means that if you're the victim of a burglary, your stuff is probably gone for good.

- **What If You're at Home:** While most burglaries take place during the day, in almost 30% of all cases someone is at home. This is not only frightening and traumatic, but also very dangerous. In up to 7% of cases where someone's at home during a burglary, they end up becoming a victim of a violent crime, whether it is assault, rape or murder.

- **They're Not Professionals:** While professional thieves do exist, up to 85% of burglaries are committed by amateurs, who are desperate, which only makes them more dangerous.

What can you do to protect your family, your possessions and yourself? The answer is simple secure your home. However, this requires that you do more than just invest in a new set of door locks, or even a home security system.

You need to take a systematic approach to ensure a whole-home security. Within this book, we'll cover what you need to know about all aspects of home security, from securing the perimeter of your property to safeguarding your home.

We will cover everything you need to know about preventing your home from being burglarized in the first place – prevention is always the best course of action. Do you think you know how to protect your home? You might be surprised at some of the vital steps you're missing out on in your plan.

Ready to protect your home, your family and your possessions from criminals? Let's get started.



## CHAPTER 1

# YOUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

There's a lot of talk today about securing your home after a disaster or when civilization ultimately tips over and collapses. However, it's an essential consideration right now – there's no need to wait for an emergency. Common thieves are a threat to you and your family's safety right this second.

While active home defense can provide you with safety if an intruder actually makes it into your home, deterrence is the better option. After all, if a thief can't break into your home, your family and possessions are inherently safer. In this chapter, we're going to look at your first line of defense.



## The Perimeter of Your Yard

What would you say is one of the most common things that can make your home a tantalizing target for thieves? If you said an unprotected yard, you're right. If a thief can simply stroll into your yard, and up to your home, you're not safe. What can you do though?



It's really as simple as investing in a fence for your yard. Even just fencing off your backyard can be enough to discourage some thieves. With that being said, you need to do more than install a white picket fence, or even a split-rail fence.

You're not going for eye candy or curb appeal. You want robust protection that will make any thief think not just twice, but three or four times before approaching your home.

So, what should you do in terms of fencing your yard? Well, there are a couple of things:

- **Height:** The first consideration here is height. Installing a fence that can be hopped with minimal effort is next to useless. It's really nothing but a waste of money and it will give you a false sense of security.



Your fence needs to be high enough that it can't be jumped. Our recommendation is a minimum of seven feet, although eight feet would be even better. The taller your fence, the harder thieves will find it to enter your yard and approach your home.

- **Gating:** Fencing your yard without blocking access to the driveway does you no good. It just means that a thief has a single point of entry to your home. Your gate needs to be as tall as the fence, and it needs to be just as strong and durable as the fence.

Of course, the weakest point in any perimeter is the entry area – your gate. Make sure that it can be secured using a padlock to prevent thieves from just pushing it open. You'll also need to make sure you lock it after each use.

Obviously, we've omitted one consideration from the list above – materials. That's because this is so critical we've dedicate an entire section to help you understand your material choices and how each will impact your safety.

**Metal:** You'll find quite a few options when it comes to metal fencing, but they're not created equal. Here's what you need to know:



- **Chain Link:** Chain link fencing is probably one of the most common options used by homeowners in the US, today. It's relatively affordable, is very durable, and can be purchased in seven or eight-foot heights or even taller to protect your property. However, while chain link can be highly beneficial, its construction is its downfall. It's very easy to scale a chain link fence, even a very tall one.

• **Hog Wire/Barbed Wire/Mesh:** These fencing materials are primarily to be used with livestock and will offer little to no protection for your yard. We highly recommend avoiding them at all costs.

They are generally very weak, structurally speaking, and can be cut with a basic pair of wire cutters or tin snips. They can also be bent, or even scaled with relative ease. Barbed wire fencing doesn't even require that much effort – a thief can simply pull up on the middle strand, and duck through to the other side.

- **Wrought Iron:** Wrought iron is the most expensive type of metal fence, but can be purchased in just about any height you want. It's durable enough to last for centuries with a new coat of paint ever few years, and no thief



is going to be able to cut or kick their way through.

Also, because most wrought iron fences use vertical uprights, they're very difficult to scale. A thief confronted with this type of fence is most likely going to give up before they even get started.

**Wood:** Wooden fencing is less expensive than metal in many instances, and it can be configured in just about any format you want. Perhaps the best option is a wooden privacy fence that stands seven or eight feet high and blocks views into your property.



As a note, you should avoid shorter wooden fencing options, and any sort of wooden fence that allows an intruder to simply step over the fence to enter your yard. These are not actual deterrents – they're decorations for your yard. That's it.

Wood does have a couple of drawbacks that aren't found with metal fencing. The first is that wood rots. You'll need to maintain it correctly and keep it sealed against the elements to ensure that it lasts. The second is that it can be cut or chopped through by a determined thief.

Of course, most burglaries are crimes of opportunity. If a thief is faced with the prospect of making a lot of noise cutting or hacking through a fence, or spending an extra 15 or 20 minutes trying to gain access to your yard, he'll pass it in favor of more tempting and easily accessible targets.

**PVC:** PVC fencing is made of hard plastic. It's relatively durable, and more affordable than other options on the market. PVC fencing is manufactured as an alternative to wood, and comes in a wide range of styles and types.

Many of these options offer the same protection for your home as wood, or even metal fencing. Of course, there are a couple of

drawbacks to PVC. The most important is this – while there are high quality, durable, strong options on the market, there are also “economy” options that are weak, and more susceptible to damage like dry rot from exposure to direct sunlight. Look for a PVC fence that comes with a long warranty, or even better a lifetime warranty.

## A Note on All Fencing

No matter whether you’re choosing wood, metal or PVC, you need to consider a few things when having the fence installed.

- **Concrete:** Make sure the fence is secured to the earth with concrete, not just pounded into the ground with a fence post driver. This ensures that you have a strong, durable barrier between your safety and the would-be thieves.



- **Hiding Places:** While privacy fences offer a lot of peace of mind, they also give thieves the opportunity to hide along the perimeter because the fence itself is solid, with no gaps for visibility. Look for fencing that provides you with visibility to the outside, and no hiding places for thieves.

- **Gate It:** We’ve already mentioned this, but it’s so important that it bears repeating. You **MUST** have a gate that’s at least as tall as your fence. That gate must be lockable, and should prevent thieves from simply entering your yard through your driveway. Otherwise, your fence is no good to you at all.



- **Verticality:** Make sure that your fence has lots of vertical posts, with few, if any, horizontal bars. This helps decrease the chance of a thief easily climbing over the fence and will make them think twice about victimizing you.

- **The Bottom Gap:** Pay attention to the space between the bottom of the fence and the ground. Ideally, there should be no gap here at all. If there is a gap, it should be no more than an inch or so, otherwise thieves might be able to crawl from under the fence.

## Are You Providing Thieves with Cover?

Now that we've covered the importance of having the right type of fencing around your property, and the need for strong, locked gates, it's time to move to another area where many homeowners fail in their due diligence.

Your yard itself might be providing thieves with the perfect cover to sneak in and enter your home. In this section, we'll cover everything you need to know in order to eliminate hiding places and make your home a less appealing target for criminals.

### Bushes, Shrubs and Trees

Who doesn't love the shade provided by a big, beautiful tree? Who doesn't love flowering shrubs and bushes? All of these add beauty and enjoyment to your outdoor areas. However, they also provide thieves with the cover that they need to infiltrate your home.

Evaluate your yard and identify



potential bushes, trees and shrubs that could provide cover for a thief intent on entering your home. Make sure that:

- There are no bushes or shrubs planted along the fence
- There are no large bushes, or groves of trees in the yard
- You have strategically planted bushes, trees, and even tall-growing flowers so they do not provide potential hiding place
- There are no trees near the house that a thief can climb to access an upper story window.

## Other Potential Threats in Your Yard

While trees, bushes and shrubs are the most obvious cover options a thief has when entering your yard, they're far from the only things that could provide a hiding place. Consider whether any of the following items are in your yard, and how well you can see around them:

- Wood piles
- Storage buildings
- Utility sheds
- Well houses
- Detached garages or carports
- Barns

Will eliminating or minimizing these threats require some strategic thinking? Yes, it certainly will. Is it worth it? Yes, the safety of you and

your family is paramount. You cannot afford to let a lack of attention to detail put you in danger.

Carefully consider the layout of your yard, and then remove elements that would provide a thief with a protected way of reaching your home. Criminals are opportunists – they don't want to risk getting caught.

## Common Problem Areas

While homeowners have known for a long time that the perimeter of their yard is probably the biggest enticement to thieves, it's surprising that so many still overlook the most common problem areas. These include the following:

- Branches that block or obscure the view out of your front windows
- Trees, shrubs, buildings or other obstacles that obscure the view from your front windows or porch to the yard itself, and the road beyond
- Shrubs that block the view out of any windows on the home



If you're able to remove obstacles and create clear lines of sight throughout your yard, they're much more likely to opt out and look for a more appealing target.

If something cannot be removed, like a well house, barn or detached garage, consider ways to make them less appealing to thieves. Not sure what those might be? We'll cover that in the next section.



## Using Nature to Protect Your Home

We've talked about the need to remove shrubs, trees and bushes that might provide cover for a thief, but that topic is mostly concerned with conventional greenery grown for visual appeal. Nature offers a host of options that can be used to enhance the security of your home's perimeter.

While these options need to be maintained, they can also help make your home a less appealing target. Let's take a look at some of the things that you can do.

### A Thorny Situation

Want to protect your home whilst maintaining some visual appeal? No problem. There are plenty of beautiful plants out there that can add eye-catching color, but also flesh-puncturing protection.

We're talking about thorny plants that can be used around your yard, against your fence, and even up against your home to help discourage intruders. Some of the best options on the market include:

**Blackberry Vines:** Love fresh fruit? Want to start making your own jelly while protecting your yard from intruders? Blackberries grow thick and lush, and the thorns on the vine will rip and claw at any intruder attempting to get across the barrier.



**Locust Trees:** There are several varieties of locust trees that can be planted around your home and yard. Each bears two to three-inch thorns that will really make a statement – back off! Some of these trees also offer edible fruits and seeds. Honey locust and black locust are two of the more popular options.

**Rugosa Roses:** These roses are more than just beautiful – they pack a punch in the form of thorns that will make thieves think twice about attempting to cross a barrier. Plus, the flowers will attract bees.

**Fire Thorn:** The fire thorn bush, or pyracantha, is quite beautiful and grows prolifically. It's also covered in thorns that create a burning, fire-like sensation when they puncture the skin.

**Cactus:** You'll find quite a few cactus varieties out there that are beautiful, and even bloom during certain times of the year. However, their long, spiky thorns will make for a strong deterrent against thieves.

These are just a few of the many plants that you can use to help protect your home. If you're looking for other options, make sure that the plants will grow well in your geographic area, require little in the way of maintenance and care, and that they bear thorns that will rip and tear at intruders.



## Considering Windows

We'll cover windows in greater detail in a later section, but for now, we want to focus on what you can do to deter

thieves from approaching them in the first place. While the front door might be the most common access point to the home, your windows are also potential options, and preventing thieves from approaching them will eliminate that possibility.

**Here's what you need to do to ensure that your windows aren't high threats to your security.**

**Cover Them:** There's nothing quite so heartwarming as the glow of light from the windows of a family room or dining room on a warm summer evening, is there? However, if those windows are uncovered, thieves can easily see inside your home.

This gives them the perfect chance to learn the layout of the place, identify potential items they want to steal, and even size up your family if they're of a more predatory frame of mind.

Plus, thieves can look inside your home with plenty of confidence at night. If you have lights on in the room, but the window isn't covered, thieves can easily see in, but you won't be able to see them due to the reflection of the light on the glass.

Ensure you cover the windows up. While we're not advocating never opening your windows to let in the breeze or some natural light, we do recommend that your windows are covered most of the time.

Go with blinds or curtains that completely block the view from the outside. Avoid thin, gauzy material that lets in light and also allows potential thieves to peer into the room. Ideally, every window of your home should be covered, even those on the second story.

**Ground Cover:** Thieves depend on their ability to prowl silently around the exterior of your home. If that ability is compromised, they'll run in



fear. You can make it so that they can't get close to your windows without making a sound that can be heard from inside the home.

In addition to planting thorn-bearing bushes or vines near the windows, consider using a thick layer of gravel in place of mulch around your plants. Gravel does more than just help retain moisture in the earth – it makes a lot of noise when you step on it.

Thieves seeing gravel under the windows of your home are much more likely to move onto another target, rather than alerting you of their presence.

## **Putting the Fear of God into Would-Be Thieves**

Protecting your home is all about preparedness and deterrence. If a thief can't make it from the road to your home's door, he's not going to be able to break in. Of course, stopping a thief from reaching your door can be a challenge if you don't know the best ways to do that. In this section, we'll detail ways to put the fear of God into any would-be intruder and send them running for the hills.



## **Lighting Things Up**

This is probably one of the most talked about home safety solutions, but also one of the most overlooked options out there. You need lights outside your home. While many burglaries do take place during the daylight hours while you and your family are away from the house, a significant number take place at night.

Thieves rely on darkness to prowl around your home without being noticed. Light things up and take that protection away from them. At the very least, you should have bright lights at every entrance to your home. That includes your front door, back door, garage door, basement door and any sliding doors.

Of course, having lights installed is just half of the equation. You actually have to turn them on in order to benefit from their protection. Consider putting your exterior lights on a timer so that they turn on at a specific time of day (like dusk) and then turn off on their own (around dawn).

In addition to installing lights around your entryways, you might also want to consider installing them in your yard. Detached garages, carports and well houses make excellent options for this. You can even find lights on the market that rely on solar power so you don't have to worry about running electricity to them (although hardwired lights are definitely preferred, as they're more reliable).

It's also recommended that you attach motion sensors to your exterior lights, both those around your entry doors, and those installed around the yard. As soon as their hiding place is flooded with bright lights, thieves are going to run for the hills as fast as they can.

The more light you can add to your home's exterior and the yard itself, the less likely you are going to be the victim of a burglar. Take away their ability to prowl around your home in the darkness, and you dramatically reduce your chances of being victimized.

## Crank Up the Volume

Thieves rely on being undetected when entering your home. We've touched on how flooding potential hiding places with light will terrify would-be intruders, but there's



something else you can do – crank up the volume.

Many home alarm systems come with the ability to install a very loud siren – think 120 decibels. As soon as the alarm is tripped, these sirens create an incredibly loud sound that goes on and on. When that happens, what do you think a thief is going to do? They're going to head for the exit as quickly as they can to avoid being spotted and potentially arrested.

Tie the sirens into the motion detectors on your lights for complete coverage of your home's exterior and your yard. Make sure that you have several sirens placed at strategic points in the yard, and around the exterior of the home.

## CHAPTER 2

# YOUR SECOND LINE OF DEFENSE



We've covered the first line of defense – the perimeter of your property and up to the exterior of your home. Things like fences, the removal of potential cover, and the installation of motion sensors, bright lights and sirens may be all that you need to protect yourself and your family from the threat of a break in.

However, don't stop there. A determined thief bent on gaining access to your valuables may not be put off. You need to pay attention to your second line of defense – basic home security techniques, how you'll protect

your children, and other considerations.

In this chapter, we'll detail what you need to know about ensuring your second line of defense is robust enough to defeat any potential threat.

## The Basics of Home Security

Confident you already know the basics of home security? You might be aware of the most common safety precautions, but chances are you don't really know what's absolutely necessary to protect your home and family.

Failing to follow the basics of home security can put you in incredible danger. In this section, we're going to detail everything you need to know, from three ways to prevent your front door from being kicked in to how you can prevent would-be burglars from knowing that you're on vacation and that your home is fair game. Ready to get started? Let's go.



## Make It Look Like You're Always Home

While thieves will break into a house when the residents are home, that's not usually their preferred mode of operation. Again, thieves are opportunists. They want to get in, find your valuables, and get out again as quickly as possible.

Yes, there are predators out there that won't blink at causing serious physical harm to you and your family, but most thieves are interested in profit, or in finding a way out of their own desperate situation, not in confronting you on your own turf.

So, what does that mean? Simply put, it means that thieves are more likely to target your house if they think you're not at home. Vacation is the prime time for this.

That means you need to avoid broadcasting that you're going to be away, and keep such information off social networks like Facebook where anyone can see it. It also means that you need to ensure that

your yard and home look like you're always there.

## Proper Lawn Care

One of the first signs that a homeowner is away is an uncut yard. If your grass is shaggy and unkempt, chances are good that a thief is going to assume that you're away. It's an invitation to break in. Avoid that by keeping your yard cut at all times.

If you actually are going on vacation, cut the grass before you go, and consider having a lawn care or landscaping service handle maintenance while you'll be away, particularly if you're going to be gone long enough that the grass will grow significantly before you return.

Of course, there's the possibility that you haven't had a chance to cut your grass lately, and that you're not actually on vacation. Thieves aren't going to realize that – they're looking at your yard quickly turning into a jungle and thinking to themselves that they have the perfect opportunity for a quick smash and grab. Keep your yard well maintained at all times.

This goes beyond keeping the grass cut. You need to pick up fallen limbs and branches, take care of trash that might blow into your yard and more. The goal is to make sure that your home looks well lived in and constantly occupied at all times.

## Lights On

When you leave for vacation, you first check to make sure that you've





turned off all your lights, right? Stop that. Turning off all the lights in a home is a sure tip off to criminals that you're not around. However, most thieves are smart enough to realize that if the same light is on in the same room for days at a time, you're not home, either.

You can do several things here. First, if you have a trusted family member, friend or neighbor, arrange for them to come over and turn the lights on and off randomly. They might even leave the TV on one night and turn it off the next.



If that doesn't work for you for whatever reason, you can opt to put your lights on a timer. Program the timer so that the pattern of lights on and off mimics the use of different rooms at various times of the day and night.

## Mail and Newspapers

If you're going to be gone for several days or longer, make sure you have someone to pick up your mail. An overflowing mailbox is an immediate sign that you're not at home, and you can bet that thieves are smart enough to check.

If you have the newspaper delivered to your home, make sure you call and have delivery suspended while you're away, as a pile of newspapers in the driveway is a dead giveaway that you're gone. If you're not able to suspend delivery, have a friend or trusted neighbor come by and pick them up.



## Don't Share Your Preparedness Details

This tip might sound a little odd, but it actually makes a lot of sense once you dig into the topic. Yes, you should take pride in the efforts you make to improve your home's safety. Yes, you probably do have friends, family members and acquaintances who could benefit from the same steps.

The problem is this – word gets around. One person will tell another, and that person will tell someone else. Eventually, it might reach the ear of prospective thieves. You're probably thinking there's nothing wrong with that. Won't it dissuade them from attempting to break into your home?

In some cases, it might, but what it actually does is forewarn your potential burglars about what they can expect when they enter your property. With that information, they could take steps to defeat your security measures.

There's also the fact that if they know your lights are on motion detectors, and that the siren will cut off by itself, they're not going to be dissuaded from breaking in at all.

Not sharing your preparedness might seem strange, but it's an essential step to take in order to ensure that you and your family are safe.



## Know the Preferred Entry Points of Thieves

One of the most important considerations in improving your home's security and the protection your family enjoys is knowing where thieves prefer to enter your home.

There are far more entry points to your home than you might assume, and you can bet that thieves know and are willing to exploit all of them. Here's a quick list of the areas where you need to pay special attention. We'll show you how to address all of these areas within this chapter, as well:

- Your front door
- Your back door
- Any sliding doors
- Your basement door
- Your garage door (main door plus side door)
- Any window on the ground floor
- Any window on the second floor if a thief can reach it
- Attic ventilation points if a thief can reach it
- Crawlspace and root cellars with access to the home's interior

As you can see, there are a lot of potential ways for a thief to get into your home. It's your responsibility to ensure that each and every entry point is protected to the best of your ability. Now, let's look at how you do that.

## **Don't Be Victimized by Weak Doors**

As mentioned in the beginning of this book, 60% of burglaries involve the front door being kicked in or otherwise forcibly opened. How can that happen? Isn't your front door the strongest protection you have? No, it's not. In fact, most front doors can be forced very easily.

Perhaps the most basic, common sense tip here is to actually lock your doors. 30% of all burglars get into the home through an unlocked door or window. Lock your doors, end



of story. This doesn't just apply to when you're leaving the house. Your doors need to be locked at all times.

Thieves might prefer the cover of darkness for their work, but they'll take the chance if an opportunity is presented during daylight. Keeping your doors locked at all times will help discourage all but the most determined of thieves.

As a note, make sure that you don't have a spare key anywhere a potential thief can find – this means not leaving it under the front doormat. If you do need to have a spare key outside the house, opt for a real estate grade lockbox or key vault. These are too tough for thieves to crack, and will ensure that you have a spare if the need arises without giving a thief an open invitation to ransack your home.



Of course, keeping your door locked only works if you actually have a lock system that's up to snuff, and a door that can't be easily forced. Too many home invasion victims falsely think that they have protection, when they really don't.

## Three Tricks to Prevent Your Doors from Being Forced

The weakest point in any defense is a point of entry. In the case of your home, the most likely first option for entering the home is going to be a door. This is usually the front door, but it could also be a side door, basement door, garage entry door or something else. We'll cover three foolproof tricks to ensure that your door can't be forced with anything less than a SWAT team battering ram.

**Locks:** How many locks do you have on your door? Are you relying on just the handle lock to keep your door secure? Think that chain

lock is really going to prevent a determined thief from getting in?

One of the most important elements to securing a door and preventing it from being forced is to make sure you have multiple locks. In addition to a handle lock, you should have at least one deadbolt. In fact, we really recommend having two deadbolts, in addition to the handle lock. The more locks you have, the more abuse a door will be able to handle before giving way.

Yes, this does mean that you'll need to carry extra keys on your key ring, but the additional security provided by multiple locks is considerable. It's definitely worth the extra few ounces of weight you'll be carrying.



**Doorframe:** Your door is only as strong as the frame that surrounds it. The frame is what your locks actually connect with to prevent the door from opening. Most residential door frames aren't really designed to stand up to a determined attack, and will give way within just a few minutes.

What this means for you is that you need to invest in reinforcement. You can do this in several different ways. One option, and the most expensive, is to have new metal door frames installed.

If that's not in your budget, you can reinforce your existing frames with metal strips. These should anchor through the frame into the surrounding structure. However, understand that reinforcement is not as strong as a metal frame.

**Prevention:** An intruder can't force what he can't touch. Rather than using a conventional screen door or glass door in front of your entry doors, invest in a metal door. You'll find options that range from

utilitarian to highly decorative, but they're very strong.

Ideally, you'll go for a wrought iron metal door or grille, but you might also choose steel. Avoid aluminum and other lightweight materials, as they're easy to damage. In addition to placing a metal grille over the actual access door, you also need to do the same for any sidelights.

A thief can very easily break the glass out of a sidelight (or even a door itself), reach in, and unlock the door. Metal grilles will prevent this from happening.

**Sliding Glass Doors:** Sliding glass doors are very popular. They let you access outdoor areas like patios and decks easily, and they allow a lot of natural light. However, thieves love them because they're very easy to force.



The locks on these doors are rudimentary at best, so a skilled thief can make quick work of them. Rather than relying on the lock to secure your home, drop a metal or wooden bar in the track so that a thief won't be able to pick the lock and slide the door open.

Make sure that the bar is as close to the same length as the open track as possible, as well. Metal is recommended, but if you're only able to use wood, make sure that the bar is thick, and made from a heavy type of wood like oak.

## Securing Your Windows

Leaving a door or window unlocked is responsible for 30% of all



home invasions. That is a shockingly high rate. After all, how often do you even look at your window locks? If you're like most people, it's not very often.

Here's the thing – burglars know that these are common mistakes and know to check these common access points to your home. A ground floor window left unlocked is an ideal way to get into your home and gain access to your belongings.

If there's a way to access an unlocked window on the second story, thieves won't think twice about trying to gain access. Most homeowners assume that because a window is on the second floor, they don't need to worry about locking it and many will learn firsthand how false this is.

All of your windows need to be closed and locked at all times. However, even a closed, locked window won't create an impenetrable barrier. Enterprising thieves can pop out a window in just a few seconds, and from there it's just a single step into your home. How do you prevent that from happening?

It's really pretty simple. Actually, there are several ways that you can help safeguard your home, and we'll discuss those below.

**Metal Grille:** Like your front door and sidelights, you can install wrought iron grilles over your windows. These can be very decorative, adding a lot of visual appeal to your home, but they can also be incredibly stout, and will prevent burglars from gaining access through any window.



Of course, it does mean essentially putting bars on the windows of your own home, and for some homeowners, that's simply not an option. Thankfully, there are other choices.

**Window Locks:** We're not talking about the swivel locks at the top of the window, or the weak plastic locks that are sometimes found at the bottom of windows or screens. What we're talking about are window locks that you install along the window frame, just at the point where the top and bottom windows separate. The mounted lock has a bar that swivels backward, preventing the bottom window from being raised.

You'll also find other styles of window locks on the market. One popular option is the pin lock, which is similar in function to the chain lock many people have on their front doors.

Some homeowners choose to install bars or grilles on the lower floor windows where the chance of a break-in is greater, and then use sturdy locks on the upper story windows. Whatever you decide to do, make sure you secure those windows as they're prime entry points to your home.



## Special Considerations for Children and Seniors

While most of the security information discussed in this book is applicable to homeowners and their families regardless of age, we do need to take a few moments to discuss those with special needs, namely children and seniors who



might be in the home. In this section, we'll break things down and explain some of the most important topics for kids and seniors.

## Children

When it comes to home security for children, the most important thing is to make sure that there's always a responsible adult around. Of course, that might not always be possible, particularly with today's economy and the fact that so many families need two sources of income just to make ends meet.

So, what should children know about security and protecting themselves if they're home and you're not? Let's list them out.

- **911** – Make sure your children understand that they need to call 911 if they feel threatened. They'll need to know their first and last name, their address and other important information, so they can provide that to the operator. Make sure that you reiterate that they're to call 911 immediately if they feel unsafe for any reason.
- **No Strangers** – With the rise in parcel snatching and thieves masquerading as delivery people or service professionals, it's more important now than ever before that your children understand they're NEVER to let ANYONE into the home if you're not there.

It doesn't matter if the person on the other side of the door claims to be a police officer, your kids should never open the door, and should call 911 immediately. You should also make sure that they never invite anyone over while you're not home.

- **Protect Them** – If your children are older, you might consider giving them some self-protection. We're not necessarily talking about firearms here, although those might be an option if your children have completed gun safety training.

It might be something as simple as a keychain pepper spray

container. A blast of pepper spray to the eyes will most likely drive off anyone who makes it into the home. You might also keep an extra container or two of pepper spray in the home for emergencies.

- **Keep the Doors and Windows Locked** – Make sure that your kids know that all the doors and windows to the home should be shut and locked tight if you're not home. There are no exceptions to this rule. Lock it up and keep it that way.



- **Alarm System** – If you have an alarm system in your home, make sure your kids know how to use it and how to set off the panic alarm if needed.



## Senior Citizens

Are you a senior citizen? Do you know a senior and are concerned for their safety? In addition to the information presented in the rest of this book, there are specific steps that should be taken to help ensure senior citizens are protected.

- **Carry Your Cell Phone** – When someone knocks on the front door, make sure you have your cell phone in your hand so that if needed you can call for help immediately. Make sure that your doors are locked at all times.

- **Consider an Alert System** – A senior alert system can make a significant difference to your safety and comfort. Choose a system that is comfortable to wear, and that has a good range

from the base unit.

- **Don't Advertise You're Alone** – Seniors that live alone should not advertise that fact. Thieves love to prey on single seniors, as they are often easy targets.
- **Use a Peephole** – If your front door does not have a peephole, have one installed, and use it to verify the identity of anyone who knocks on the door before opening it.
- **Use an Alarm System** – Seniors should have an alarm/security system to protect their home, and should be very familiar with how to use it, including how the panic button works.

## Creating Safe Rooms within Your Home

No matter how well you prepare for it, and no matter how robust your home security system might be, the possibility that a criminal will get into your home will always exist. A smart planner understands this and prepares for it, just like any other possibility.



A safe room is the answer.

Does that mean you need to invest in a concrete-lined bunker underground? Not necessarily.

A safe room can be almost any room in the home to which you and/or your family can retreat to in times of danger. It can be anything from a bathroom with a reinforced door to a full-blown bunker lined with canned goods and bottled water. We're going to take a moderate approach here.

Your safe room needs to meet a small criteria in order to ensure that you and your family can remain protected in the event of a home invasion.

- **The Door** – The door to your safe room needs to be made from solid wood or, better yet, metal. Our recommendation is a steel slab door painted to match the rest of the doors in your home. Instead of a flimsy interior door, install a studier exterior door.
- **The Doorframe** – Just like the frame around your front door, back door and garage access door, your safe room door needs a strong frame to support it. Either invest in a metal frame from the outset, or reinforce the frame with metal to prevent it from being kicked in by a criminal.
- **Locks** – The door to your safe room needs at least one deadbolt, but we'd recommend two at the minimum. Adding a door bar can also give you an additional layer of protection and security, while ensuring that even a battering ram will have trouble getting through.
- **Windows** – Whatever room you choose to make your safe room, make sure that it has no windows. These are weak points in your defense, and while they might conceivably offer a way out for your family, they can also let intruders in.

If you have no other option than to use a room with windows, apply ballistic film to the glass to ensure that criminals cannot shoot through the window. We also recommend that you invest in thick curtains and keep them closed.



- **The Walls** – The walls of



your safe room are also incredibly important. Conventional drywall doesn't do a thing to stop bullets. You'll need something sturdier. You can opt to build your safe room in a cement basement to provide some extra protection. You can also invest in steel panels, concrete blocks, or even in a sand-packed wall.

- **A Way to Communicate** – You will need a way to communicate with the outside world if you're forced to retreat into your safe room. You cannot count on remembering to bring your cell phone with you. You also can't count on the landline being accessible in case a thief were to cut it.

We recommend keeping a spare cell phone or "burner" in the safe room, along with a fully-charged battery charger. Make checking and recharging the battery part of your regular home maintenance.

## For Apartment and Condo Owners

A lot of the information presented so far in this book is geared for owners of single-family homes. If you live in an apartment or a condo, you have different considerations that will need to be made, but it's just as crucial that you take your safety and security seriously. You can't rely on security guards at the gate, or video monitoring in the complex or neighborhood.

In fact, you might be in even greater danger of a break in – the National Crime Prevention Council's statistics shows that apartments are 85% more likely to experience a break in compared to a single-family home.



Most of the information presented so far about doorframe reinforcement and window protection can still be used, but you have no control over the exterior of where you live. In this section, we'll cover some important home security tips to follow if you live in a condominium or an apartment.

- **The Exterior** – The apartment or condo property should be well-lit, gated, and secure. You should have plenty of visibility on the grounds, including parking areas, lawns, play areas, laundry rooms and more.

We recommend examining the view from your apartment's windows before you even decide to move in. If you've already moved in, take a moment to determine visibility now, and make any preparations that you can.

- **The Entry** – Make sure that there is plenty of light around the entry to your apartment or condo. For hallways, make sure that all exterior light fixtures are working, and that you can see clearly through the peephole in the door at night. If lights are not functional, alert the management team and make sure they're repaired.

- **Locks** – Insist that the management install new door locks when you move in. They might claim they were replaced before you moved in, but there is no guarantee that actually happened. In addition, install at least one deadbolt on your exterior access door(s), but our recommendation is to use two.

- **Block Sliding Doors** – If your apartment or condo has a sliding glass door that opens on a patio or balcony, make sure you have a metal pole in the track to prevent the door from being slid open after the lock has been forced. We also recommend that you install curtains or light-blocking blinds on your sliding doors.

- **Windows** – Just as in a single-family home, windows are primary points of access in apartments and condos. Install strong window locks in all areas and don't rely on the built-in

locks to keep you safe. Cover all windows with thick curtains and keep them closed.

As a final note, you need to install a security system in your apartment or condo, just like any single-family home owner. This brings us to our next subject – how to choose between the various systems available on the market. There are lots of options, and it can be pretty confusing to determine which is right for your needs. We'll dedicate the next chapter to comparing those systems.



## CHAPTER 3

# UNDERSTANDING SECURITY SYSTEMS

**W**hile there's a lot that you can do around your home to ensure better safety and preparedness in the face of a break in, you can't do it all. You need a little help here and there. A security system can give you the peace of mind you need, and can help ensure that you and your family remain as safe as possible.

Of course, there are plenty of different options on the market. Is a traditional system the best choice? What about DIY solutions? Is a smart security system better for your needs? In this chapter, we'll run through the various options on the market and help you decide which might be best suited to protecting your home and family.

## Traditional Security Systems

Traditional security systems have been around for decades. You probably know some of the names, like ADT and Ackerman. There are newer options, too, like SimpliSafe and Piper that you might recognize. If you're looking for a solution that works "out of the box" and requires the least amount of effort on your part, this might be the right solution for you.

### Pros

There are quite a few pros to going with a traditional security system.



For one, you get 24-hours professional monitoring to give you a peace of mind. For another, if you're a little technologically challenged, you don't have to worry about doing the installation yourself, which means that you don't have to worry that you didn't install a component correctly.



## Cons

While there are plenty of benefits to going with a traditional security system, there are some drawbacks. For one, they're pretty invasive. Most traditional systems, like those offered by ADT, need to be hardwired into your home's electrical wiring. This means the installer needs to drill and cut holes in walls.

Another is the fact that you don't actually own the equipment – you're technically leasing it from the company and if you decide to cancel your contract, that equipment goes back to the monitoring company.

That brings us to another con – you'll need to sign a contract with the company. Most of these are at least a year, but some are for two years or longer. If you choose to break the contract before it's up, you'll be required to pay steep penalty fees.

## The Options

You'll have access to a broad range of options with traditional security systems that allow you to enhance your safety and security. For instance, ADT offers several packages, each of which brings additional benefits to the table.

The Traditional System offers the fewest standard inclusions, but does allow upgrades and optional features like cellular connection

and smoke monitoring, as well as water detection and carbon monoxide detection. The Remote Package brings remote web and mobile access to the table, as well as email and text alerts. The Video Package expands on this with remote locking and unlocking capabilities, lighting and thermostat control from a smartphone, garage door control and remote secure video.

## Costs

Traditional security systems are among the most expensive on the market. While they're not lacking in features, you'll need to determine whether the costs are worth it, particularly when compared to other choices out there. How much might you spend with a traditional security provider? Really, that depends on the company you choose, as well as the extras and options in question.



Here's an example: ADT charges \$28.99 per month for their lowest level package, and that's only if you sign a three-year contract with the

company. You'll also have to pay other fees, including an installation/activation fee, which is usually \$100.

A lot depends on the level of protection you want, and the company you choose to provide your security. For instance, you can purchase burglar alarms from [SimpliSafe.com](http://SimpliSafe.com) and then pay the company just \$15 per month, but you have to install the system yourself.

Of course, the cheapest package offered by SimpliSafe will set you back \$260, and the next step up is \$350. The most comprehensive system option is the Ultimate Package, and it'll set you back \$540 for

just the equipment.

## DIY High-Tech Security Systems

You don't have to rely on a security company to provide your safety – you can do it yourself with a DIY home security system. You'll find that high-tech DIY systems can offer very comprehensive coverage that you handle on your own.

### Pros

Perhaps the most important benefit of a high-tech DIY system is that it puts you in control over your own safety, and it doesn't require that you pay ongoing costs to a monitoring company. This can save you a significant amount of money, while ensuring that you're in charge of your own security.

### Cons

While these types of systems are highly beneficial, they do have some drawbacks. The first is that the equipment can be costly. The second actually ties in with the primary benefit here – you're in charge of your security. That means there's no one monitoring your home but you. You also need to install all of the equipment yourself, connect it together and to your home's network, and troubleshoot problems if they arise.



## Basic Installations

A basic installation should include several important elements, such as:

- Exterior and interior motion detectors (tied to lights and sirens outdoors)
- Cameras indoors and outdoors
- Door and window sensors/alarms
- Remote door lock and garage door controls
- Ability to monitor video feeds from a smartphone or tablet
- Remote system arming and disarming via smart devices
- Cellular connectivity to ensure communications and system operation even if the power is out or a landline is down



## Advanced Installations

Advanced installations can build on the setup described above with any number of upgrades and additions. Some of the most common options include:

- Smoke and fire detection
- Carbon monoxide detection
- Water leak detection
- Remote lighting and thermostat control
- Remote appliance controls



## Costs

The costs of a high-tech DIY system can vary drastically depending on the scale of your installation, the equipment in question and many

other factors. Costs will also vary depending on whether you choose a wired or wireless system, and whether you do the installation work yourself, or hire a professional.

For example, you'll pay about \$35 for a single IP-connected wireless security camera from YI, or you can purchase a set of four HD indoor/outdoor Wi-Fi cameras from Zmodo for \$100. Higher end cameras can go for as much as \$80 or \$100 each. A NEST indoor security camera that ties into the NEST home automation system will actually set you back almost \$200.

On top of the costs of cameras, you'll need to factor in the cost of perimeter sensors, motion detectors, smoke/fire/carbon monoxide detectors, lighting controls and all the rest.

## DIY Primitive Security Systems

A primitive DIY home security system can be an affordable solution for those who live in areas where the threat of a break in is low, or for those who don't have the budget for a high-tech system. These are not as advanced, but they do include quite a few safety features.



### Pros

There are several important benefits that you can gain from a primitive DIY system. For instance, you'll spend a lot less than you would for a high-tech system. You can also enjoy good security, although not at the same level as with a traditional system or a high-tech DIY setup. Finally, they're simpler to install and manage than more complex systems.

## Cons

As you might imagine, there are some drawbacks to these systems. One of the most important is this – they're primitive. That means they're not tied together necessarily, and you won't enjoy seamless coverage the way you would with a different type of system.

## Installs

Primitive DIY setups can be as simple or complex as you like. They typically include several elements, including the following:

- Motion detector-enabled exterior lights and sirens
- Motion detectors in the home's interior
- Window locks
- Door alarms



## Costs

DIY setups are the cheapest on the market, but the price will be determined by the quality of the equipment you purchase, and just how in-depth you decide to go with your build. For instance, you can purchase a high-quality motion detector light with three super bright LEDs on Amazon for about \$60.

More conventional halogen setups will cost you around \$21 each, but they do need to be wired into the electrical system. A triple-headed setup with 180 LEDs that produces 1200 lumens is available for \$53.

Of course, you'll still need to add other features to your system. A four-piece door alarm set with a 120-decibel siren will set you back

around \$23 from Sabre. GE manufactures a set of four window alarms for \$16, as well. These are just a few examples of the options available to you.

## The Security of Your Security System: Is Your Smart Home Smart?

Smart home technology has grown by leaps and bounds. Today, it seems like there's a "smart" system for just about everything in your home. We've got smart refrigerators, smart lights, smart HVAC systems and more. All of these devices connect to your home's Wi-Fi system in order to communicate.



However, there's a problem. Those smart systems? They're not really all that secure. There is no single, overarching security solution out there to protect smart devices from hackers and others who might want to attack your system. There have been plenty of security breaches in the news, including one of the most frightening in which a smart doll was actually used by criminals to spy on a child and access personal and financial data.



This also applies to your home's security system. How easily hackers can gain access to the system? What sort of protection is provided by the manufacturer, or are you left to figure that out for yourself?

A compromised smart home security system could put you and your family

in serious danger. Imagine a thief being able to hack into the system and disarm your alarms. Imagine an attacker being able to automatically unlock your doors, or open your garage door. These are not far-fetched possibilities, either. If a hacker gains access to your smart security system, you have no security. It's as simple as that. Once they're in, they have control over all elements.

If you decide that a smart security system is the right option for your needs, investigate the encryption offered and learn how the manufacturer beats modern thieves armed with the ability to hack smart systems.





## CHAPTER 4

# HOME INVASION TRAINING AND AWARENESS

**N**o matter how robust your security system might be, and no matter how many safeguards you put in place, it's crucial that you and your family are prepared for the potential of a home invasion. Preparedness for this sort of event is similar to prepping for any other disaster, from fires to floods and earthquakes.

You need to run drills to ensure that the entire family knows what to do in the case of a break in, where they can hide until the threat is over, and where important tools and equipment might be located in the home. In this chapter, we'll run through some important tips for home invasion training and awareness.

## Home Invasion Training Drills

Before you can run invasion drills, you need a plan in place. This will dictate what you and every other member of the family should do in the case of a break in.

First, determine what everyone's role will be. This will largely hinge on the number of people in the family. For instance, if there are five of you, a father, mother, and three kids aged 13, 11, and 5, you could break the responsibilities up like this:

- The 11-year-old is responsible for reaching a designated safe area and calling 911.



- The 13-year-old is responsible for getting the 5-year-old and reaching the designated safe area.
- The mom is responsible for making sure that all the children are doing as the plan dictates.
- The father is responsible for checking the home and then retreating to the safe room if necessary.

By giving each family member a specific task to accomplish (and just one task), you're able to reduce the amount of confusion that ensues during a home invasion. It makes it far more likely that everyone will be able to reach a designated protected area, and that help will be on the way as soon as possible.

**Remember – don't try to be a hero.** Your first instinct might be to act against the intruder, but this is the wrong tack to take. Use the advantage of knowing your home's layout to reach safety, and make sure that each family member follows the home invasion plan. Keeping everyone safe should be your top priority.

So, create a plan that fits your family. Give everyone a responsibility and then practice regularly. We recommend practicing your drill at least once per month.

It's also important that you make your drills as realistic as possible. While we don't recommend that your false invader be armed, we do recommend that you practice at night, when visibility is low. This will help you become familiar with the situation you'll most likely encounter when a thief breaks into your home at night.

Another drill that you might find helpful is to walk through your home at night, but rather than thinking like a homeowner and parent intent

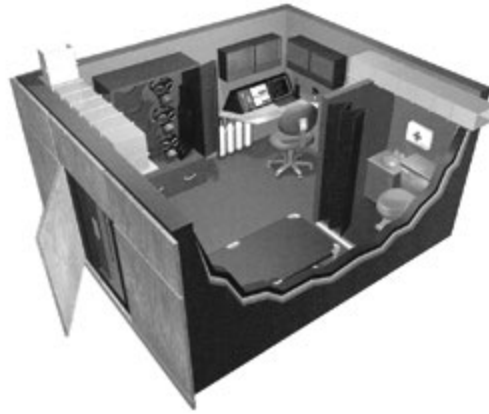
on protecting your family, you need to put yourself in your attacker's shoes. Scout the home from the yard – what weaknesses do you see? Some of the questions you'll want to answer are as follows:

How close can you get to the home before the motion detector activates the lights? Can you get up to the windows without being noticed? Does the gravel under the windows actually make enough noise? Where might you hide as you move toward the front door? After you're inside the home, where would you go first?

## Designated Safe Areas

The best option for a designated "safe area" is an actual safe room, as we discussed previously. Every homeowner should have such a room, and it should be stored with supplies you'll need to stay safe and comfortable until help arrives. Your safe room should include:

- A cell phone and charger
- A fully charged battery charger
- A means of self-defense (including firearms)
- Bottled water
- Snacks/canned food



What if you don't have a safe room, though? What if your family members aren't able to reach the safe room in time? There are several other options that can work as impromptu hiding places where thieves are less likely to look. These include:

- The closets in children's rooms
- Under the bed in a child's room (as a last resort)
- Pantries
- Utility rooms
- Laundry rooms

If all else fails, understand where a thief is most likely to look first, and head in the other direction. The prime rooms that a thief will search include the following, in this order:

- The master bedroom, including closets and under the bed
- The entertainment room/family room
- The office or computer room
- The living room
- The garage

In most instances, thieves will be interested only in those rooms where people most frequently store their valuables. They're unlikely to bother with the kitchen, the laundry room, the pantry or any other location where valuables are usually not found.



## CHAPTER 5

# PREPARING FOR SPECIAL SITUATIONS

The information we've discussed thus far deals with safeguarding your home during everyday life. However, there are quite a few special situations that will make the information we've covered null. In this chapter, we'll discuss some of the most common situations in which you'll need to take different steps.

## Parties

Parties should be events filled with fun and laughter, where friends and family members can get together and enjoy themselves. However, they can also be the perfect way for a thief to enter your home, particularly if you're having a large gathering, with lots of people coming and going. The following tips can help you ensure strong security during parties at your home:

- Lock up all valuables.
- Lock the doors to all bedrooms and any other areas that are off limits to party guests.



- Place coats and hats in a secure, locked room and with access given only to authorized personnel.
- Insist on just one bathroom for guest use, and lock other doors in the home.
- Use home video feeds to your advantage and regularly check monitors to ensure that guests stay in designated areas.
- Have a sober adult police the party.
- Patrol the perimeter of the home.

## Garage Sales

Ready to get rid of some of your unwanted stuff and make a little cash at the same time? Garage sales are a great way to do that. However, they can also be the perfect cover for an enterprising thief. Here are some of the most important tips to safeguard your home while having a successful garage sale:

- Keep the sale outside and away from the house to eliminate the chance that someone can get into the home.
- Lock the doors to your home and turn on the alarm system.



- Make sure the actual garage is closed and locked. Verify that the garage entrance door is also locked.
- Monitor video cameras around the home throughout the duration of the sale.
- Watch for any shoppers who seem to be straying too



the back.

close to the home and warn or escort them away.

- If possible, have an adult inside the home for the duration of the sale responsible for keeping an eye out for potential intruders.
- Have someone make regular rounds of the home to make sure no one is attempting to sneak in through

## Craigslist Sales

Craigslist is an incredibly popular online platform that connects buyers with sellers of all types of merchandise, from food dehydrators to cars and trucks. However, it's become known for the dangers posed by meeting with potential buyers or sellers. The following tips will help keep you and your family safe while ensuring that you're able to use the platform:

- Never meet with a buyer alone, even if it's at your home. You should always have another adult with you at all times.
- If it's avoidable, do not meet a buyer at your home. Arrange to meet at a public area where there will be plenty of onlookers/witnesses.
- If you have no choice but to meet a buyer at your home, make sure you have at least one other adult with you.
- Be wary of meeting a buyer who arrives with more than one other person. However, expect the buyer to take the same precautions you do to ensure their own safety.
- If advertising multiple items on Craigslist and expecting more than one buyer, follow the same precautions at home as you

would for a garage sale if possible. Always make sure to have another adult with you, and monitor your home's video feeds.

## Working with Contractors

Contractors can help you do anything you want to your home, whether that's expanding the kitchen, finishing out the basement, adding a back deck or something completely different. However, they do pose threats to your safety and that of your family. Follow these tips to ensure security when working with contractors:



- Never leave a contractor and their crew alone at your home. At least one adult should be

present at all times.

- Do not allow contractors or their crew to walk through your home unattended. If the work is being done inside the home, they should be restricted to only the area where construction is occurring.
- Consider arranging for a portable bathroom to be on site to prevent contractors and crews from using the one in your home. This can help eliminate the potential for subterfuge (theft while ostensibly using the restroom).
- Lock the doors to all bedrooms and other areas where valuables are stored while contractors or their crews are on site.
- Make sure that the contractor is licensed, bonded and insured, and that you do a background check on them prior to hiring.



## Social Unrest

The term “social unrest” conjures up images of society at the brink of disaster, or even collapsing over the edge. However, it doesn’t have to be anything quite so dire. If you’ve paid attention to the national news in the past few years, you’ve no doubt seen the incredible rise in violent protests and looting across the country. It’s vital that you know how to protect your home and family in the case of these types of incidents.



- Build and outfit a full safe room in your home where you and your family can weather the storm should things go from bad to worse.
- Make sure you have strong protection on your windows, particularly ground-floor windows. We recommend metal bars/grilles for the best defense.
- Ensure that your entry doors are secured by multiple locks and that the doorframe is reinforced. We also recommend metal door grilles, and grilles over your sidelights.
- Monitor your exterior video cameras regularly.



- Make sure you have self-protection available, including firearms, and that you and your family are fully trained in their use.
- During times of social unrest, your alarm system should be active at all times, at least in so far as door and window sensors are concerned. At night, all components need to be active.

## CHAPTER 6

# SUPPLIES AND SOLUTIONS

In this chapter, we've collected the names of companies and suppliers that can help you build a robust home security solution, whether you're interested in going the traditional route, building a DIY system, or something else.

## Alarm/Security Companies

We've included traditional security companies like ADT, with newer companies that offer high-tech, smart technology for your convenience.

- ADT – <http://www.ADT.com>
- Ackerman Security – <http://www.AckermanSecurity.com>
- Alarm.com – <http://www.Alarm.com>
- FrontPoint – <http://www.FrontPointSecurity.com>
- Vivint – <http://www.Vivint.com>
- Moni – <http://www.MyMoni.com>
- SimpliSafe – <http://www.SimpliSafe.com>
- Piper – <http://www.GetPiper.com>

If you're interested in building your own security system from scratch, Amazon.com is the place to go for indoor and outdoor cameras, motion detectors, lights, sirens, window and door sensors, carbon monoxide sensors, smoke detectors, and system hubs.

## All Types of Locks

- SEC Lock – <http://www.SECLock.com>
- Master Lock – <http://www.MasterLock.com>
- Kwikset – <http://www.Kwikset.com>
- Schlage – <http://www.Schlage.com>
- Brinks Home Security – <http://www.BrinksPPR.com>

## Ballistic Film

- LLumar – <http://northamerica.llumar.com/>
- CJ Buffer – <http://www.CJBuffer.com>
- ACE – <http://www.USAce.com/security-laminates>

## Exterior Doors

- Home Depot – <http://www.HomeDepot.com>
- Lowes – <http://www.Lowes.com>
- Weather King – <http://www.WeatherKingDoors.com>
- Mastercraft – <http://www.MidwestManufacturing.com>
- Jeld-Wen – <http://www.jeld-wen.com/en-us//products/exterior-doors/product-lines/steel-exterior-doors>

## Conclusion

Today, more than ever before, it's crucial that you take immediate steps to secure your home. The incidence of home invasion and burglary is on the rise nationwide. It's spread from urban areas to suburban ones, and even homeowners in rural areas are now at an increased risk. It's not the same world it once was – leaving your doors unlocked even in an area that you think is safe is just an invitation for thieves to break into your home.

Of course, securing your home is far more complex than simply

installing an alarm system. You need to take a systematic approach to security and safety, beginning with the first line of defense – the perimeter of your yard, and your yard itself. Installing a strong fence along your entire property line and eliminating potential hiding places for thieves within your yard are just the first few steps toward better security and improved peace of mind.

By this point, you should be well aware of what you need to do in order to secure your home and keep your family safe in these troubled times. You should have a better understanding of the various security systems on the market, and the options available to you. You should also have a much firmer grip on how to secure your home and protect your family during special circumstances when a home security system might not provide much in the way of defense.

It's a dangerous world we live in, and taking action now to protect your family, your home, and your possessions is a vital consideration. If you follow the steps outlined within this book, you will lower your odds of becoming yet another victim.

## Works Cited

<https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/latest-crime-statistics-released>

<https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/fbi-releases-preliminary-semiannual-crime-statistics-for-2016>

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/21/5-facts-about-crime-in-the-u-s/>

<http://time.com/4651122/homicides-increase-cities-2016/>

<http://www.backdoorsurvival.com/20-home-security-crime-prevention-secrets-for-preppers/>

<http://www.asecurelife.com/home-security-equipment/>

<https://www.alarm.com/>

<https://www.ackermansecurity.com/news/how-to-choose-the-best-security-fence-for-home>

[http://www.protectamerica.com/home-security-blog/around-the-home/the-best-fences-for-home-security-draft\\_11763](http://www.protectamerica.com/home-security-blog/around-the-home/the-best-fences-for-home-security-draft_11763)

<https://www.securityfence.com/products/fencing/pvc-fence-detail.html>

[http://readynutrition.com/resources/using-plants-to-secure-the-home\\_09092010/](http://readynutrition.com/resources/using-plants-to-secure-the-home_09092010/)

<http://www.hgtv.com/remodel/mechanical-systems/12-easy-ways-to-improve-your-home-s-security-pictures>

<https://www.installitdirect.com/blog/home-security-landscaping-tips-easy-ways-to-make-your-home-safer/>

<https://www.safety.com/how-to-burglar-proof-windows/>

<http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/news/2014/06/14-ways-to-make-your-home-more-secure/index.htm>

<http://www.homeadvisor.com/r/securing-your-home-from-burglary/#.WUKglhPyuWg>

<https://www.familyhandyman.com/home-security/inexpensive-ways-to-theft-proof-your-home>

<http://www.iii.org/article/securing-your-home-against-burglary>

<https://www.safewise.com/blog/10-simple-ways-to-secure-your-new-home/>

<https://waynealarm.com/5-security-tips-kids-need-know-home-security/>

<https://www.protectyourhome.com/home-security-tips/home-safety-tips-for-children>

<https://www.angieslist.com/articles/8-home-security-tips-protecting-your-children.htm>

<https://www.theseniorlist.com/2014/08/home-security-safety-for-seniors/>

<https://www.seniorliving.com/article/home-security-and-safety-tips-seniors>

<http://www.theorganicprepper.ca/how-to-create-a-safe-room-in-your-house-or-apartment-11092014>

<https://www.nononsenseselfdefense.com/saferoom.htm>

<http://freedomoutpost.com/create-safe-room-house-apartment/>

<https://www.safewise.com/resources/apartment-security>

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-siciliano/6-tips-for-apartment-secu\\_b\\_3472153.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-siciliano/6-tips-for-apartment-secu_b_3472153.html)

[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/17/technology/cayla-talking-doll-hackers.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/17/technology/cayla-talking-doll-hackers.html?_r=0)

<http://www.delcoalarm.com/run-home-invasion-drill-practicing-plan/>

