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### **Crime Prevention Tips Every Homeowner Should Know**

Fort Myers Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit goal is to reduce crime through education and heightened awareness of our surroundings.

To accomplish this effectively, it is important to remove opportunities for a criminal to take advantage of you and your property. Improving security and promoting a safer environment limits criminal opportunity and reduces monetary losses. A well rounded plan incorporates training to address security, personal safety, and emergency preparedness.

**Complying with our recommended guidelines will not make the site criminal proof but may be a deterrent.**

No matter where you live, you can protect yourself more effectively by planning ahead. The Fort Myers Police Department suggests that homeowners looking to make their home burglar resistant should take a three-fold approach: deter, detect, and delay. Here are essential crime prevention tips to help keep your home a less desirable target for burglary:

#### Tip #1: Eyes of a Burglar

Walk around your home with the eyes of a burglar. Look for weaknesses—sliding glass doors that could be jimmed off the track, glass that could be broken to gain entry, window unit air conditioners that could be easily removed, and so forth. A committed burglar can usually find a way into a house, but you can make it more difficult for them, and this starts with knowing your property and potential entry points for a break-in. Take a walk around the outside as well and note what pricey items are in view, tempting would-be burglars.

#### Tip #2: Lock it.

Some home owners unknowing create an easy target for burglars by leaving the doors and windows unlocked or open. Remember to lock the doors and windows. Also lock the door leading from the garage to the house, even if the garage door is down. (It's easy to manipulate.)

#### Tip #3: Don't hide a key.

One day, you forget your keys, and you decide it's a good idea to hide one under the doormat or one of those fake rocks. That's a terrible idea. Get rid of that idea right now, and pretend you never even considered it. Give a spare key to a neighbor instead. If you absolutely must leave a spare key outside, put it in a combination lockbox.

#### Tip #4: Mailbox and wall plaques.

Limit information you put on your mailbox. Don't display your whole name on the mail box or exterior wall plaques. It's easy to look you up, find your phone numbers, maybe even your workplace, and begin to track your movements or assume your identity.

Tip #5: Secure windows and sliding doors.

Many sliding doors can be popped off the frame, even when locked. Prevent this by placing a strong steel bar or two-by-four in the back groove, which prevents the door from sliding along the groove and opening.

Place either an auxiliary lock or pin in the door frame. You can do the same with windows.

Tip #6: Be modest.

Prevent your home from being a target by tucking away expensive items. Keep cars and bikes locked and/or in the garage. After purchasing a new piece of expensive electronic equipment, dispose of the box directly instead of leaving it next to your trash can—which lets would-be burglars know you have something new that could bring in great cash. Consider keeping expensive jewelry, cash and treasures in a safe deposit box or hidden safe.

Tip #7: Create the illusion you're always home.

The majority of burglaries take place when people aren't home, particularly during the day, while the victims are at work. Deter burglars by creating the impression that you're always home: Leave on lights, the radio, or the television. And if you're going on vacation for a while, don't advertise your absence. Arrange for someone to pick up the mail, newspapers, mow the lawn, set out trash cans regularly and park in your driveway.

#8: Secure the area surrounding your house.

Trim bushes and trees to discourage burglars from using them as hiding places. Avoid planting low shrubs in front of windows; you may even consider planting thorny shrubs for an added deterrent. And be sure to add lighting outside your home.

Tip #9: Get to know the neighbors.

Tight-knit communities suffer fewer burglaries because people look out for each other and strangers stick out.

Tip #10: Install an alarm system.

Alarm systems are available at a number of price points, but an effective one should include sensors at entry points, motion detectors inside the house, and a loud outdoor alarm that alerts the entire neighborhood when someone has forced entry.

Tip #11: Routine

Change your routine; Leave the house different times and take different routes.

Tip #12: Lighting

Check your exterior lighting for broken bulbs, dirty covers and insufficient coverage. Repair, replace, clean and or install additional lights. Don't give criminals the cover of darkness to commit their criminal activities.

**NOTE: The Fort Myers Police Departments crime prevention practitioner will conduct a FREE home security assessment for you.**

**Please call the crime prevention unit at 239-321-7753 to schedule an appointment**