

# Home Security Guide



*City of Carlsbad Police Department*



## Introduction

Most residential crimes committed in the City of Carlsbad are crimes of opportunity. By taking the time to secure your property, you eliminate the opportunity for most crime. There are five (5) elements that when working properly together are scientifically proven to reduce your risk of residential crime. These elements are:

1. Symbolic Barriers – Does your property exhibit your personal identity? Is it clear when the public property ends, and your private property begins? What makes your property unique?
2. Actual Barriers – The hardware and physical security that keeps an intruder out.
3. Traces of Activity – The perceived presence or absence of residents or neighbors. Does it appear someone is at home, even when you're out?
4. Detect-ability- The ability to see and hear what is going on around you. Surveillance. Are you able to be the eyes and ears of your street?
5. Neighborhood Collaboration. Are you working together with your neighbors? Home security does not stop at your front door. Security starts where your neighborhood begins.

This guide takes an environmental approach to securing your home incorporating these five (5) elements into three (3) environments. The three (3) environments are

### 1. The Exterior

The exterior includes identity, lines of surveillance, lighting, landscaping and house numbers. Through proper lighting and carefully managed landscaping, you can create an environment that is aesthetically pleasing but allows surveillance, defines your space and guides guests onto and out of your property.

### 2. The Perimeter

The perimeter includes doors, windows and other entrances. How difficult is it to enter your home? Most burglars enter a home through a window, door or garage that has been left open or unlocked. Can you see an intruder while they attempt to enter your home?

### 3. The Interior

The interior includes all interior activities like lighting, timers and traces of activity. Your goal is to make your home appear as though someone is home, all the time. If a thief is uncertain what is going on inside your house, he/she will probably not attempt to enter.



## Lighting

Lighting provides the ability to see and be seen, the most important element of home security.

- Single Family Homes

Light up the perimeter of your house throughout the night. Light entrances, rear doors and dark areas around your house. If someone must stand in a light to tamper with your property, they feel like they can be seen, even if they cannot.

The best place for outside lighting is under the eaves and lighting the wall of your house. Also, light gates and driveways. Remember, just little bit of light goes a long way at night.

- Multi-Family Homes

Along with the single-family home suggestions, light aisles, passageways and recesses within the building complex with a maintained minimum of at least *twenty-five one hundredths (.25) of a foot-candle* at the ground level after dark.

Light open parking lots, carports and common areas like laundry rooms and mailboxes with a maintained minimum of *one (1) foot-candle* of light on the ground surface after dark. Protect these fixtures with weather and vandalism resistant covers. Take care landscaping does not deter from lighting, especially when overgrown

- Timers and Sensors

Equip outdoor light fixtures with a timer or a photoelectric cell (sensor), which automatically turn the lights on at dusk and off at dawn. Or, convert your wall switch to an electronic timer.



## Landscaping

Landscaping creates an identity for your yard and defines your private or semi-private space. It can also help direct visitors and deter unwanted guests.

- Fences and Landscaping

Prune tree limbs high enough to prevent passage over fences. Avoid thick bushes that might conceal a hole in the fence. Thick foliage also reduces vision into a yard. Use a fence you can see through instead of a solid fence to allow surveillance and deter hiding. Remember the ability to see and be seen is the most important element in your home's security.

- Gates

Padlock gates that provide access into your yard. Refer to the garage section for padlock specification. Just like fences, select gates that you can see through instead of gates that are solid. Illuminate gates into your yard so people using the gate can be seen.

- Roofs and Trees

Avoid trees that provide a ladder to rooftops and balconies. Prune tree limbs away from the house.

- Trees and Shrubs

Keep bushes trimmed low in planters and use low-profile plants. Allow bushes to grow no higher than three (3) feet. Prune trees up from the ground creating a canopy no lower than five (5) to six (6) feet. This allows vision through trees and low-profile plants. Design landscaping to work with lighting.

- Entranceways and Porches

Keep plants low or clear them out of entrances. Prune plants away from address signs. Increase visibility to reduce opportunity. Do not create a barrier with bushes and plants. Maintain vision into these areas and do not provide a place for someone to hide.

- Windows

Keep plants below the window ledge. Do not let an overgrown bush provide a place to hide. For a full-length window, use a low-profile plant.

- Security Plants

Security plants have prickly leaves or thorns and limit access over fences and around windows. Plant low-profile security plants on or around problem areas.



## House Numbers

House numbers are key to finding a house during an emergency.

- Single Family Homes

Display your street number in a prominent location on the street side of your house. Place this number in a position that is easily visible to emergency vehicles to speed their approach.

The numbers should be no less than four (4) inches in height and should be a contrasting color to the house. Do not allow landscaping to cover house numbers.

Ensure house numbers are well-maintained.

House number should be illuminated during the hours of darkness.

- Multi-Family Homes

Position an illuminated diagrammatic chart of the complex at each emergency entrance of a multi-family complex. This chart shows the location of the buildings and units within the complex.

In addition, display prominent identification numbers or letters, not less than four (4) inches in height on each building and individual unit within the complex. These numbers and letters should be easily visible to approaching vehicles and/or pedestrians.

- Ensure that landscaping does not deter from the visibility of the house or the unit numbers.





## Doors

Doors provide physical security to your home and keep intruders out. The proper selection of a door and door lock is key.

- Wooden Entrance Doors

All wooden entrance (including garage entrance doors) doors should be of a solid core construction with a minimum thickness of one and three-fourths (1-3/4) inches.

- Sliding Glass Doors

Check to see if your slider has claw-like hardware that prevents the door from being rocked out of the track when locked. If not, have a professional install a pin (angled up) that secures the sliding door to the stationary doorframe.

- French Doors

Equip French doors with a single-cylinder dead-bolt lock and metal flush bolts for the inactive leaf and a re-enforced strike plate (see description below). Use fully tempered glass or coat the glass with a burglary resistant glaze.

- Single Cylinder Dead-bolt Lock

Equip all single or double entrance doors with a **single-cylinder** dead-bolt lock. The bolt should have a minimum projection of one (1) inch and be constructed to repel a cutting tool attack. Double-cylinder deadbolts can create a firetrap and are prohibited by code.

- Strike Plate

Use a strike plate with at least two (2) inch screws that screw into the frame of the house and not just the soft wood frame of the door.

- Double Door Inactive Leaf

Provide the inactive leaf of double doors with metal flush bolts having a minimum embedment of five-eighths (5/8) of an inch into the header and footer of the doorframe.

- Viewer or Peep Hole

Furnish all front entrance doors with a wide -angle (190 degrees) viewer or peephole.

- Out Swinging Doors

Supply hinges for out-swinging doors with non-removable hinge pins or mechanical interlock.



## Windows

Regularly check window locking hardware and frames. Ocean air can corrode frames and reduce integrity. Settling houses often prevent window latches from working properly. A window is not secure in the open position. Also, windows should be a minimum of forty-eight (48) away from any locking device.

- Sliding Windows

Check to see if your sliding windows were built to prevent the window from being lifted from the track when in the locked position. If not, equip sliding windows with metal screws in the upper track. Adjust the screws to prevent the window from being lifted from the track.

If the window does not have hardware that prevents the window from being forced to slide in the locked position, equip the window with an anti-slide bolt or piece of dowel.

Use these two methods together to prevent the window from being forced open. For optimal security, secure the window in the locked position, not partially open.

Windows and doors left ajar for pets are not secure and create an opportunity for crime.

- Double-Hung Windows

If you have older double-hung windows it is possible to jimmy open double-hung window latches. To secure this window, have a professional install a pin by drilling a downward sloping hole into the top of the bottom window through and in to the bottom of the top window.

Further, many double-hung windows have settled in a way that prevents the latch from functioning.

- Crank Windows

If you have an older house with crank windows, make sure the frame has not decayed and is in good condition. Also, check the cranking device and latch to make sure they are functioning properly. You can replace the latching device with one that has a hole on the inside. Through this hole you can insert a pin to secure the window in the closed position.

- Louvered Windows

Louvered windows are a security risk. An intruder can slide louvers out of place for entrance through the window. For optimal security, remove and replace these windows with a solid glass or other type of ventilating window.



## Garages

A garage is the most commonly entered part of the house. Many times, the garage door is open or, doors have been left unlocked.

- Wooden Garage Doors

Wood doors should be solid or have panels a minimum of five-sixteenths ( $5/16$ ) inch in thickness. Attach the locking hardware to the support framing.

- Aluminum Doors

Aluminum doors should be a minimum thickness of .0215 inches, riveted together a minimum of eighteen (18) inches on center along the outside seams. Attach a full-width horizontal beam to the main door structure, meeting the pilot or pedestrian access doorframe within three (3) inches of the strike area of the pilot, or pedestrian access.

- Fiberglass Doors

Fiberglass doors should have panels with a minimum density of five (5) ounces per square foot from the bottom of the door.

- Sliding Bolt

Doors with sliding bolt assemblies should have a minimum bolt diameter of three-eighths ( $3/8$ ) inch and protrude at least one and one-half ( $1-1/2$ ) inches into the receiving guide. Attach the slide bolt to the door with non-removable bolts from the outside. Use rivets to attach the slide bolt assemblies. Install re-enforced slide bolts with padlock covers to prevent burglars from cutting the slide-bolt or padlock from garages.

- Padlocks

Padlocks used with an exterior mounted slide bolt should have a hardened steel shackle locking both at the heel and toe, and a minimum five (5) pin tumbler operation. Padlocks used with interior mounted slide bolts should have a hardened steel shackle with a minimum four (4)-pin tumbler operation.

- Garage Pedestrian Doors

See the door page for the proper security of the garage pedestrian doors. This includes the exterior door from the outside into the garage and the interior garage door that leads into the house.





## The Interior

How the inside of your house appears plays an important role in a thief's decision to try and enter your home.

- Lighting

Light your house so you never come home to a dark house.

Put interior lights on timers. A family room light should come on when it starts to get dark and go off when you normally go to bed. A bedroom light could come on and go off throughout the evening simulating activity in the house.

The key is making your house look "normal" like someone is at home all the time.

- Timers

Use timers on a variety of household items to simulate activity in your home. Radios, for example, simulate noise.

- Documenting and Identifying

Regularly take a narrated video of your home to document the contents. Take photos of hard to describe items like jewelry, antiques or other valuables.

- Serial Numbers

Keep a list of all the serial numbers in your home. Keep this list and all your other important numbers in your safe deposit box or fireproof safe. It is also a good idea to go through your entire home and list the contents. This is very helpful in an emergency such as fire or earthquake.

- Emergency Contact Numbers

Know and store emergency contact numbers. Keep the Police Department's nonemergency number stored in your phone for quick access. Call the Police Department 24/7, when activity is taking place.

- Displays

Be careful what is displayed in front of a window. Do not display expensive items like televisions and electronics in clear view of a window. This is equally important for purses and wallets. You do not want to create an opportunity for someone who is walking by your house to see something and want to find a way to steal it.

- More information about Home Security, including a three-part, short video is found on the Police Department's website located at [www.carlsbadca.gov/police](http://www.carlsbadca.gov/police). Other crime prevention tips can also be found in the "Community Information" and "Crime Prevention" section.
- To learn about crime that occurs in your area, go to [www.crimemapping.com](http://www.crimemapping.com). You can enter your address, create a radius around your address, choose crime types and receive regular alerts.
- To receive regular communication from the Police Department, follow the department
  - On Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/CarlsbadPoliceDepartment>
  - On Twitter - @carlsbadpolice
  - On Instagram - @carlsbadpolicedept
  - On our website – [www.carlsbadca.gov/police](http://www.carlsbadca.gov/police)
  - To join our email alert program – email your name, address, phone number and preferred email address to [jodee.reyes@carlsbadca.gov](mailto:jodee.reyes@carlsbadca.gov)
  - Remember to register for emergency alerts at <https://www.readysandiego.org/>