

# Apartment Security

Safe City Factsheet Series Issue 2: Apartment Security

By international standards Sydney is a safe city and you can play an important role in maintaining the safety of yourself and your property.



Justice & Attorney General



## Five Fast Facts

1. 43% of Australians living in metropolitan areas have experienced a home burglary.\*
2. More than 30% of home burglaries happen when someone is at home.\*\*
3. In 16% of reported home burglaries, burglars entered through an unlocked door or window.\*\*
4. 39% of burglars enter through a forced window and 31% through a forced door.\*\*
5. The main targets for burglary are valuable, portable items like laptops, iPods, cash and jewellery.\*

\* AAMI Home Security Index March 2005

\*\* NRMA, NSW 2006

## Tips for apartment security

1. **Secure main entrance**  
Ensure security systems restrict access to residents only, for example; swipe card access.
2. **Garage and storage areas are a target**  
Secure storage areas with quality locks and always lock up valuables such as bicycles and surfboards.
3. **Always lock up when you leave**  
Always lock accessible doors and windows even if you're just going out for a few minutes.
4. **Fire exits are a risk**  
Never leave fire exit doors propped open.
5. **Apartment balconies are a risk**  
Never leave balcony doors unlocked or open even in warm weather.
6. **Natural ladders are a risk**  
Don't provide easy access to upper level balconies, for example; wheelie bins, lattice, trees, nearby fences.
7. **Never buzz strangers into the building**  
Don't let people that you don't know into your building even if they seem trustworthy.
8. **Don't give out spare sets of keys**  
Never give out copies of your building or apartment keys to tradespeople or friends.
9. **Garage tailgating is a risk**  
When driving into your garage area, never let anyone follow you through the garage entry door.
10. **Install deadlocks**  
Fit your main apartment doors with high quality deadlocks. Keep spare keys in a location close to the door to make sure you can get out quickly in the event of a fire.

## Watch out. Be neighbourly

Being observant and knowing your neighbours are the best defences against burglary when you live in an apartment.

- ✓ **Join or form a security committee for your apartment building**  
It's a great way to get to know your neighbours and discuss the most effective security measures for your apartment building.
- ✓ **Establish a security guide for all residents**  
Establish security guidelines for buzzing in visitors and reporting suspicious activity.
- ✓ **Be aware. Make an effort to talk to your neighbours**  
The better you know your neighbours, the better you'll be able to identify and deter any suspicious activity in or around your apartment building.
- ✓ **Leave your contact details with a trusted neighbour**  
That way they can get in touch in case of an emergency or suspicious activity when you're not at home.
- ✓ **Tell your neighbours if you have been burgled**  
Always let other residents know if your apartment has been burgled so they can be aware and watch out for suspicious activity. You might also need to change communal door locks if your keys have been stolen.
- ✓ **Keep up appearances when you are on holiday**  
Ask a trusted neighbour to collect your mail, take your garbage out and water any plants on your balcony while you are absent for lengthy periods.

## Don't make your apartment a target

- ✓ **Don't tell burglars you live alone**  
Leave an answering machine greeting that says "We can't come to the phone right now..." even if you live alone.
- ✓ **Make sure valuables aren't visible**  
Don't leave iPods, laptops, wallets or keys near doors and windows where they can be seen.
- ✓ **Mark your property**  
Mark your household possessions with your driver's licence number using an engraver kit available from your local library or Police station. It will deter burglars and make identification and recovery of your goods much more likely in the event of theft.
- ✓ **Don't list your first name on the apartment directory**  
Offenders may target residents that they see as being more vulnerable, for example; women living alone.

## Lock up and lock out

Locking out offenders is the key to burglary prevention.

- ✓ **Deadlock main apartment door(s)**  
Install a high quality deadlock on your main apartment door (s). Keep spare keys in a location close to the door to make sure you can get out quickly in the event of a fire.
- ✓ **Secure sliding doors and windows**  
Doors should be bolted top and bottom or fitted with a deadlock. Sliding doors and windows should be fitted with track-blockers that can't be removed by reaching in from the outside.
- ✓ **Secure all windows with keyed locks and/or security grills**  
Especially in the case of ground floor apartments and windows at the rear of your apartment building.
- ✓ **Install a security alarm system**  
Alarm systems should be highly visible, emit a loud noise and send a signal directly to a security service when activated.
- ✓ **When moving in consider installing new locks**  
When you move into an apartment you won't know whether it's been burgled before. For extra security it's a good idea to get locks changed and re-keyed.
- ✓ **Synchronise door locks**  
Install the same key-operated lock system on all apartment building doors. It makes locking up and owner-entry easier.
- ✓ **Secure main entrances**  
Doors to your apartment building should be fitted with an automatic door closer device. Never leave the main entrance door propped open or let anyone follow you in through the entrance door.
- ✓ **Main entrance security systems**  
Entrance security systems should allow you to identify and screen visitors to your apartment building via intercom and buzz them in from within your apartment.
- ✓ **Secure lift access**  
Any lifts in your apartment building should be fitted with security access systems to prevent unauthorised access to apartment floors, for example; Swipe card access.



The City of Sydney Council, the Department of Justice and Attorney General and the NSW Police Force provide this information as general advice only. Readers should exercise their own skill and care in use of the information.

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