

# Home Security

Safe City Factsheet Series Issue 1: Home 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 valuables, portable items like laptops, iPods, cash and jewellery.\*

\* AAMI Home Security Index March 2005  
 \*\* NRMA, NSW 2006

## Tips for home security

1. **Consider getting a dog**  
 A dog's bark can be an effective deterrent for burglars. Place a 'Beware of Dog' sign on your front fence or gate.
2. **Garages and sheds are a target**  
 Secure garages and sheds with quality locks and always lock up valuables and equipment such as bicycles, surfboards and power tools.
3. **Lock up every time**  
 Always lock accessible doors and windows even if you're just going out for a few minutes.
4. **Unoccupied homes are a target**  
 Make your home seem occupied even when you're not there. Don't draw curtains and blinds during the day. Turn down the volume of your telephone.
5. **Don't give burglars a place to hide**  
 Keep gardens, trees and shrubs trimmed back and ensure fences don't block visibility.
6. **Natural ladders are a risk**  
 Don't provide easy access to second storey balconies and windows, for example; wheelie bins, lattice, trees, nearby fences.
7. **Be observant**  
 Offenders are less likely to target a home if they think they might be observed.
8. **Don't hide your spare keys**  
 Never give out copies of your house keys to tradespeople or friends. Do not hide spare house keys in an obvious place around your home.
9. **Don't advertise valuables**  
 Never leave valuables such as wallets, keys, computers, jewellery and iPods where they can be seen from outside.
10. **Secure main doors**  
 Fit your main doors with high-quality deadlocks and consider installing a peep-hole in your front door. Keep spare keys in a location close to the door to make sure you can get out quickly in the event of a fire.

For more information visit [www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/safety](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/safety)

## Watch out. Be neighbourly

Being observant and knowing your neighbours are the best defences against home burglary.

- ✓ **Ask neighbours to help when you are on holiday**  
Ask neighbours to keep an eye out, collect your mail and report any suspicious activity if you go away on holidays.
- ✓ **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 home.
- ✓ **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've been burgled**  
Always let other residents know if your home has been burgled so they can be aware and watch out for suspicious activity.

## Don't make your home a target

Burglars will target homes that appear to be easier to break into without getting caught.

- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **Leave lights on when you go out at night**  
Leave a light/s on at night when you're out and draw curtains and blinds to make it appear as though someone's home.
- ✓ **Install sensor lighting**  
Install exterior sensor lights that will turn on automatically when someone approaches.
- ✓ **Don't leave keys in obvious places**  
Intruders can take your keys and return to your home when you're away.



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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## Lock up and lock out

Locking out offenders is the key to burglary prevention. But make sure you don't lock yourself in. Leave spare keys in locations close to doors so you can safely escape in the event of a fire.

- ✓ **Secure all windows with keyed locks or security grills**  
Especially in the case of ground floor windows at the rear of your home.
- ✓ **Install and use 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. They should also be fitted by a licensed installer. Make sure you activate your alarm system even if you're only leaving home for a short time.
- ✓ **When moving in consider installing new locks**  
When you move into a new home you won't know its history. For extra security it's a good idea to get locks changed and re-keyed.
- ✓ **Lock up your power box**  
Lock your electricity meter box so your alarm or lighting systems can't be tampered with.
- ✓ **Safeguard small valuables**  
Deposit any smaller valuables like jewellery or cash in a safe deposit box. Never keep large amounts of cash at home.
- ✓ **Lock up outside**  
Lock any side or back gates. Repair holes in fences that might be used to access your property.

## Know your stuff

Know what possessions and valuables you own.

- ✓ **Mark your property for identification**  
Mark or engrave your valuables with your driver's licence number. Marking your property will deter theft as it will make your valuables difficult to sell. It will also make recovery of your belongings much more likely in case of theft. Your local Police station and local library should have engravers that you can use to mark your property.
- ✓ **Keep a record of household possessions**  
Make a list and take photos of any valuables that can't be marked like jewellery or art work. Keep a record of the serial and model numbers of your household goods.
- ✓ **Keep your contents insurance up-to-date**