

# Crime Prevention

## Protecting Your HOME SWEET HOME

Do you know what to do to make your home safe from burglary?

You can help protect your family, home and other possessions by investing a small amount of time and money. Most burglars will spend no more than 60 seconds trying to break into a home.

When implementing these or other crime prevention tips, always keep your own safety in mind. Do not implement anything which may hinder or prevent your ability to escape dangerous or hazardous situations. Your family should be aware of safety features and know how to quickly overcome them if they need to get out or away in an emergency!



St. Joseph, Missouri  
**Police Department**

501 Faraon Street  
St. Joseph, MO 64501

Crime Prevention Unit  
816-271-4882  
816-236-1473

## PROTECTING THE OUTSIDE OF YOUR HOME

**House Numbers.** In an emergency, can firefighters, law enforcement or ambulance drivers find your home quickly and easily?

**Place permanent numbers, no less than 3 inches in height,** on the residence.

**Fences.** Do you have a privacy fence obstructing the view of your backyard? By providing concealment, privacy fencing is a disadvantage to home security. You can eliminate this disadvantage by:

- Removing every other slat to allow greater visibility.**
- Planting hostile-type plants to cover the outside of the fence, such as roses with large thorns.**
- Padlocking your gate so that entry is more difficult.**
- When building a fence, have the cross rails placed inside.**

**Lighting.** Can a prowler, burglar or vandal hide in the shadows of the night around your home? One of the best sources of cost effective protection is adequate exterior lighting. Effective lighting should be:

- Placed to illuminate as many sides of the house as possible.**
- Placed under the eaves of the house or shielded with protective covering to prevent tampering.**
- Kept on during all nighttime hours.**

An inexpensive timer or photoelectric cell will automatically turn the lights on dusk and off at dawn.

**Landscaping.** What about your trees, shrubs and landscaping? Could a potential criminal hide there?

The security of your home depends on visibility. Your home should maintain its visibility so that neighbors and patrol cars can watch for illegal activity. Ornamental plant growth should be kept well trimmed, especially around doors and windows where a person could hide while breaking into your home.

While planning your landscaping, you might consider discouraging intruders from window areas by planting prickly plants, such as roses, some hollies, pyracantha, etc.

Investing in inexpensive landscape lighting will not only provide light to hidden areas, it will serve as path lighting for individuals who are visiting, and is also an attractive landscaping feature.



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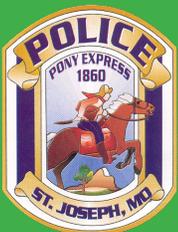
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## DOORS & LOCKS

**Exterior Doors.** Can you see who is outside before you open the door? Install a wide-angle viewer (peephole) in the door. This will let you know who is at the door. A 190 degree peephole is recommended.

Is the door solid core? Is it metal? Is it cracking or splitting? How thick is it? Not only your front door, but all of your exterior doors and the door between your house and the garage should be of solid core construction or heavy gauge metal with a minimum thickness of 1 3/8 inches. A thinner door is the panel-type, make sure joints and panels are well glued, not split or rotten.

Are your French or double doors secure? One of the doors must be inactive. You can accomplish this by installing flush bolts at the top and bottom of the door secured into metal strike plates. A deadbolt should be on the active door.

**Strike Plates.** Your strike plate should have at least 3 inch wood screws. Better yet, install a heavier gauge security strike plate, using longer screws. The screws should take you past the frame into the structural 2x4's.

**Hinges.** Are any of your hinges exposed to the outside? While checking out all of your exterior doors, look at the hinges. If your hinges are exposed to the outside, we recommend that you replace them with non-removable hinge pins.

**Keys.** Where are your keys? If you don't know where the keys are, you defeat the purpose of the lock. If a former owner or tenant might still have a key, have a locksmith rekey your locks. This is also a good time to evaluate the quality of your locks. Consider upgrading to better locks.

Also, where is your garage door opener? Is it in your vehicle? Is it in your car you left for service? Treat your garage door opener with as much security as you do your house key-it is an electronic key to your home.

**Locks.** Do you just have the old fashioned lock-in-the-knob type? This type of lock offers you privacy and convenience, but not security. In fact, many can be opened by simply using a credit card or screwdriver. For safety, you need a secure lock. A deadbolt lock is recommended with the following features:

- A single cylinder
- A minimum 1 inch bolt throw
- A rotating pin tumbler
- A steel interlocking screw

Economizing on padlocks will not protect you adequately. Large bolt cutters or pry bars are commonly used to break padlocks. Minimum standards for an exterior padlock are:

- Case hardened steel, with a 9/32 inch shackle.
- Locking mechanism in both the heel and toe.



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## WINDOWS

**Have you added any locks to your windows?**

Windows are vulnerable. It is recommended to install supplementary locks on all moving windows. Windows can be secured in various ways.

Pinning a window shut reduces the chances of it being pried open. This can be accomplished by drilling a hole at a slightly downward angle through both the moveable and fixed window frames and then placing a pin, nail or eyebolt in the hole. The nail is to be used as a removeable sliding pin NOT hammered in! Remember to allow easy removal for safety. Other methods include a tight-fitting dowel in the track of the window or adding commercial thumb-screw locks.

Be careful that any method you use to secure windows does not hinder the escape of family members in an emergency.



## GARAGES

**What about the garage door itself?** Is it deteriorating? Does it have windows? How about the garage door opener? Does the emergency automatic door release cord for your garage door opener hang by the door when your door is closed? Most garage doors are difficult to secure. You can help secure them by:

- Removing knobs or rings from emergency automatic garage door releases. *Intruders can use a coat hanger to pull the cord, releasing the garage door opener. By removing the knobs or rings, you have disabled a safety device. Plan another way to release the door in case of an emergency.*

- Keeping garage doors closed and locked at all times.

- Covering windows to prevent people from viewing inside. *Mirrored film on your windows allows you to see out, but doesn't allow someone to see in without some difficulty.*

- Replacing your door with a windowless metal garage door. *Your garage door should be secured with a deadbolt lock and be of the same construction as exterior doors.*



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