
Windows

SECURING YOUR WINDOWS

Many burglars may try to enter a house through a window, either by opening it or breaking the glass. Often, they will open the window catch with a pry bar or a sharp, pointed object. Other burglars will try to remove a pane of glass by removing the glazing spline or putty with a knife. Still others may break the glass, reach in, and release the window catch. You can protect your home by reinforcing the glass in the windows and by making windows more difficult to open.

Fire Safety Alert!

Windows can provide a fast exit in a fire or other emergency. When you secure your windows against burglary, be sure to plan for good emergency escape routes. Your local fire department can offer recommendations.

SECURE WINDOW GLASS

Normal window pane glass is about 1/8 inch thick and easily broken. You should consider replacing this glass with pane glass, which is thicker and stronger, or tempered glass, which is stronger and will not cut someone who breaks it. The following glasses and plastics are arranged in descending order of break resistance.

Highest Resistance (Unbreakable)

- ◆ Polycarbonate plastic vinyl-bonded laminated glass, 1/2 inch thick or more
- ◆ Acrylic plastic sheets, at least 3/8 inch thick

Medium Resistance (Vandal-Resistant)

- ◆ Wired glass, 1/4 inch thick
- ◆ Laminated glass, 1/8 inch thick
- ◆ Acrylic plastic, 1/8 inch thick, depending on specific chemical characteristics

Medium Resistance (Break-Resistant)

- ◆ Plate glass, 1/4 inch thick
- ◆ Conventional float or sheet window glass, more than 1/4 inch thick
- ◆ Tempered plate glass, at least 1/8 inch thick

Shatter-Resistant Window Film

You can also secure a window by placing transparent polyester film on the inside glass. The film holds the glass together if the window is broken. Film is especially useful for sidelights and windows that could offer access to inside doorknobs and catches.

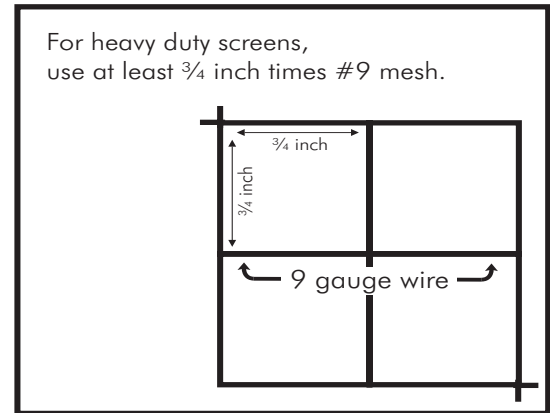


Heavy Duty Screens

Heavy duty security screens with a minimum of 3/4 inch times number 9 wire mesh can protect vulnerable areas. If possible, install the mesh on the inside of the window. If you must install the mesh on the outside, use one-way screws or a 3-inch lag bolt to make removal more difficult.

Ornamental Grillwork

Grillwork can protect windows that are vulnerable, but they are not recommended if you are using these areas as a fire exit. Check your local fire codes before installing grillwork.

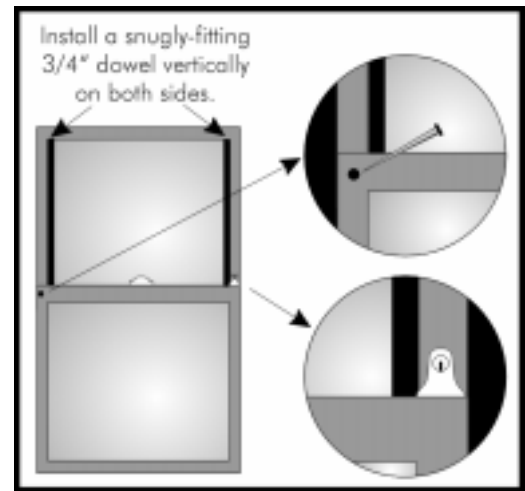


DOUBLE-HUNG WINDOWS

There are several ways to secure a double-hung window. The simplest method is to place a snugly-fitting 3/4-inch dowel on both sides of the window, above the bottom frame.

A second option is to drill a hole through the sliding portion of the window halfway into the stationary portion. Then, place a strong nail into the hole. You can place another hole about four inches above the first so that you can open the window for ventilation but still leave it secure.

A final option to install keyed or twist locks above the sliding portion of the window. If you use keyed locks, keep a key nearby in case you need an emergency exit.

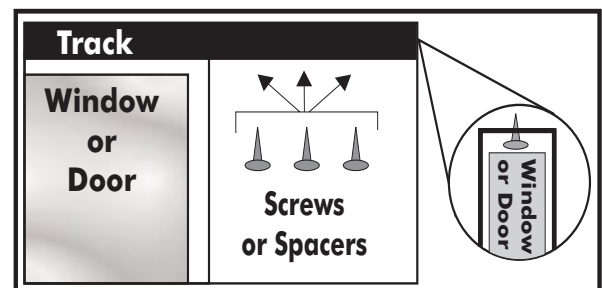


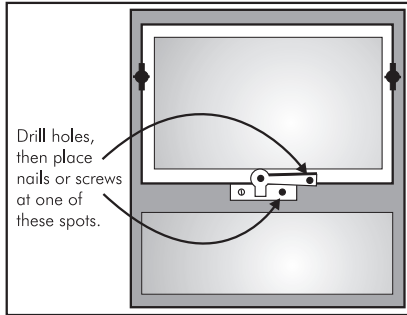
SLIDING WINDOWS

If the window slides on an inside track, place a snugly-fitting metal rod or wooden dowel in the bottom track to keep the window from being forced open. Charlie Bars serve the same function (please see page 9). The rod or dowel should be a 1/2-inch diameter; if the span is over three feet, use a 3/4-inch diameter rod.

Some windows can be secured with a pin in the bottom track. Close your window and drill at a downward angle through the inner frame and halfway into the outer frame. The hole should be slightly larger than a nail. Slide a pin or nail into the hole. You should not do this with insulated windows.

Many sliding windows have considerable space between the window and the top of the track. This allows the window to be removed easily, making repair simple. Unfortunately, it also makes a burglar's task much easier. Keep your windows in their tracks by installing screws or spacers in the upper track of the windows.





PUSH-OUT WINDOWS

Push-out windows provide ample opportunity for a small person to enter your home. To secure them, drill a hole through the locking portion of the handle and into the frame. A pin can then be inserted to stop the opening action. A screw offers a more permanent solution, but can also pose a fire safety hazard.

LOUVERED WINDOWS

Although louvered windows may be very attractive, the panels are easy to remove and they cannot be properly secured. The best option is to replace louvered windows.

Alarms

SELECTING AN ALARM SYSTEM

Selecting an alarm system or alarm system company can be a daunting task. Although your local Sheriff or Police Department cannot recommend a specific company, we can offer a few tips to guide you in making a decision.

CONSULT THESE AGENCIES BEFORE BUYING AN ALARM SYSTEM

Washington State Burglar
and Fire Alarm Association
1-800-248-9272

Your Local Better Business Bureau
Your Local Chamber of Commerce

Washington State Attorney
General Consumer Protection
Division
1-800-551-4636

Your Local Sheriff/Police
Crime Prevention Unit

1 Consult several reputable alarm system companies. You should get competitive quotes and information about what services are offered. Obtain written proposals and estimates that include the company's recommendations and all associated cost factors, including permits or inspections if required.

2 Ask the company representatives several questions, including the following.

- ◆ Are they and the installers licensed and bonded?
- ◆ Do they subcontract or use company installers?
- ◆ Do they carry insurance to cover damage done to your property during installation?
- ◆ Does the system have a battery backup? If so, how is the battery recharged, and how often does it need replacing?
- ◆ What is the written guarantee on parts and labor and the length of the warranty?
- ◆ Are there service charges after installation?
- ◆ What is the policy on false alarm billings?
- ◆ What is the policy on cancelling alarm services? Is there a minimum contract term?
- ◆ Who owns the system?
- ◆ Can you get an unmonitored system at the same price?

3 **Conduct research at your local library to learn about hard-wired and non-wired systems**, as well as the types of sensors that are available. Keep in mind that most systems can be bypassed by cutting the phone lines. Consider wireless backups and “cloning” to another close phone line in case your line is cut by burglars. Ask about “panic” alarms and where the siren or noisemaker will be installed. You may want to consider portable key pads.

4 **Decide if you need a local alarm or monitored system.** Local alarms activate a bell, siren and/or strobe light outside your home or business. Monitored systems have a contract with your alarm company to monitor your alarm system 24 hours a day via your telephone line. They will call police or fire services if your system is activated. Ask what their response process and response time will be.

5 **Make sure your alarm system and any planned installation is in compliance with local ordinances.** Most jurisdictions now have or plan to have ordinances that govern the number of false alarms you may have before fines are assessed. You are responsible for all false alarms and compliance with ordinances and the permitting process. When your alarm is installed, insist that the alarm company teach you to correctly operate the system, including panic codes.

6 **Consider having fire and smoke sensing systems integrated into your alarm system (they are required in all new homes).** They will not only cut your losses in case of a fire but also may cut your insurance costs.

7 **Be sure your system alarms** for a short period of time and then shuts down. The alarm should then rearm itself for the next intruder or attempted intrusion.

8 **Contact prior and/or current users** of the alarm company and ask their opinion.

IF YOU HAVE A SECURITY SYSTEM

Prominently display the decals supplied by your alarm company on your doors and windows to deter criminals.

Be sure your alarm system has a reliable battery back up. You should test batteries at least every six months, replacing them if necessary. To remind yourself, test your alarm system when you test your smoke detectors.

Be sure you update your security company at least annually with your information, addresses of respondents, phone numbers and vacation plans.

Leaving Home

PREPARING FOR VACATION

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

If you have any questions about your home security or security on your trip, call your local Sheriff or Police Department Crime Prevention Officer.

To reduce the chances of burglary while you are on vacation, you should complete the home security upgrades noted in this book. Repairs on locks, doors, and lighting, as well as the personal property inventory and Operation ID should all be done before you leave.

In addition, you should take the following steps. Photocopy this page and use it as your vacation checklist.

1. Notify responsible neighbors or relatives of your itinerary and contact numbers. Ask your Block Watch Captain to coordinate house checks. Choose a trusted friend or neighbor to be your representative while you are gone.
2. Notify your local Sheriff/Police Department or storefront and alarm company about your schedule and leave your local representative's numbers as well as your away contact numbers.
3. Arrange to have the Post Office stop delivering your mail until you return, or arrange for it to be picked up regularly by your representative.
4. Cancel all normal deliveries such as milk and newspapers, or arrange for your representative pick them up.
5. Ask your representative to help you make your home look occupied. He or she should mow your lawn or shovel your walk, collect any brochures or information left on your door or in the yard, and open and close your drapes.
6. Do not leave any easily stolen objects such as power mowers, garden hoses, lawn chairs, and bicycles in your yard.
7. Hide all valuable or irreplaceable items, (e.g., jewelry, computers, firearms, important papers, or checkbooks) in a safe place such as a safety deposit box or home safe. You could also leave them with a trusted friend or relative (check your insurance coverage). Make sure your home inventory is up to date and keep copies in separate safe locations.
8. Unplug your garage door opener so that your garage doors are secure. Consider placing a padlock through the track for extra security.
9. Consider moving your motor vehicle(s) to a different location until you return, or have your representative move them regularly to make it appear as if you are home.
10. Avoid publicity about your trip until you return.

Consider setting your lights, radios, and televisions on reliable electronic timers so that your home will look and sound occupied while you are gone.

